

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE



Including letters from Ann Boleyn,
Nell Gwynn, Vanessa, George Sand,
Emma Hamilton, Mary Shelley, Mrs.
Sheridan, the Empress Josephine,
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Jane
Austen, and many others.

Selected and Arranged by
R. L. MEGROZ

THE SEVEN STRINGS OF THE LYRE

The Life of George Sand
1804-1876

By Elizabeth W. Schermerhorn

FEW other women have enjoyed the intimacy of so many men of first-rate genius or been so powerful an influence in inspiring their best work as George Sand. The Seven Strings of the Lyre are her seven chief lovers, among others Alfred de Musset, Chopin, and Prosper Mérimée.

From a study of important new material, hitherto unavailable, Miss Schermerhorn tells with compelling vividness and an engaging humor the fascinating story of George Sand's life from her youth in the English convent in Paris down to her last days as the queen of the Parisian super-Bohemia in her unending search for a tranquil life and perfect love.



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LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

Disclosing the Female Heart
from Girlhood to Old Age

Selected by
R. L. MÉGROZ

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

To
RICHARD HOLT
Connoisseur in Music and Literature

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Note. The majority of the translated letters appear in English for the first time.

I wish Adam had died with all his ribs in his body.
—*Boucicault*.

I bless the inventor of an art which excels all others
. . . because it enables me to read in your heart in
spite of the distance separating us.
—*Madame Niccoboni*.

To love her is a liberal education. —*Congreve*

When one sins against love, one wounds oneself.
—*Susette Gontard* ("Diotima").

SECTION I

FIANCÉES

Obstacles usually stimulate passion, but sometimes they kill it.—*George Sand.*

Woman is born for love, and it is impossible to turn her from seeking it.—*Margaret Fuller Ossoli.*

A woman, unlike Narcissus, seeks not her own image and a second I ; she much prefers a not I.—*J. P. Richter.*

There is a woman at the beginning of all great things.—*Lamartine.*

LETTERS FROM WOMEN IN LOVE

SECTION I—FIANCÉES

THE BETROTHAL OF MARGERY BREWS

i

The following letters from the Paston correspondence refer to the betrothal of Margery Brews, and give us a sort of Dutch-interior picture of fifteenth century courtship which was usually a severely business-like affair. But here the romance of true love broke through all that. The Dame, Margery's mother, helps her future son-in-law to chose his Valentine. But Margery and John were not married until after much hazardous business negotiation between her father, Sir Thomas Brews and Sir John Paston, his elder brother.

DAME ELIZABETH BREWS TO JOHN PASTON THE YOUNGER

(Feb. 1477.)

To my worshipful Cousin John Paston, Be this Bill delivered, etc.

COUSIN, I recommend me unto you, Thanking you heartily for the great cheer ye made me, and all my Folks, the last time that I was at Norwich; and ye promised me, that ye would never break the matter to Margery unto such time, as ye and I were at a point. But ye have made her such (an) Advocate for you, that I may never have rest night nor day, for calling and crying upon me to bring the said matter to effect, etc.

And, Cousin, upon Friday is Saint Valentine's day, and every Bird chooseth him a Mate; and if it like you to come

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

on Thursday at night, and so purvey you, that ye may abide there till Monday, I trust to God, that ye shall so speak to mine husband, and I shall pray, that we shall bring the matter to a conclusion, etc. For, Cousin,

“It is but a simple Oak,
That is cut down at the first stroke,”

for ye will be reasonable I trust to God, which have you ever in his merciful keeping, etc.

By your Cousin Dame Elizabeth Brews,
otherwise shall be called by God's Grace.

ii

*MARGERY BREWS TO HER VALENTINE,
JOHN PASTON THE YOUNGER*

(They were married the same year)

February 1477.

Unto my right well beloved Valentine, John Paston,
Esquire, be this Bill delivered, etc.

RIGHT reverend and worshipful, and my right well beloved Valentine, I recommend me unto you, full heartily desiring to hear of your welfare, which I beseech Almighty God long for to preserve unto his pleasure, and your heart's desire.

And if it please you to hear of my welfare, I am not in good hele of body, nor of heart, nor shall be till I hear from you ;

For there wots no creature, what pain I endure,
And for to be dead I dare it not discure (discover).

And my Lady my Mother hath laboured the matter to my father full diligently, but she can no more get than ye know of, for the which God knoweth I am full sorry. But if that ye love me, as I trust verily that ye do, ye will not leave me therefore.

FIANCÉES

And if ye command me to keep me true wherever I go,
I wis I will do all my might you to love, and never no
And if my Friends say, that I do amiss, [mo.
They shall not let me so for to do,
Mine heart bids me evermore to love you,
Truly over all earthly thing,
And if they be neverso wrath,
I trust it shall be better in time coming.

No more to you at this time, but the Holy Trinity have
you in keeping; and I beseech you that this bill be not seen
of none earthly Creature save only yourself, etc.

And this Letter was indited at Topcroft, with full heavy
heart, etc.

By your own,
Margery Brews.

iii

MARGERY BREWS TO THE SAME

1477

To my Right Well beloved Cousin John Paston Esquire,
be this Letter delivered, etc.

RIGHT worshipful and well beloved Valentine, in my
most humble wise, I recommend me unto you, etc. And
heartily I thank you for the Letter, which that ye send me
by John Beckerton, whereby I understand and know, that
ye be purposed to come to Topcroft in short time, and
without any errand or matter, but only to have a conclu-
sion of the matter betwixt my father and you; I would be
most glad of any Creature alive, so that the matter might
grow to effect. And thereas ye say, and ye come and find
the matter no more towards you than ye did aforetime, ye
would no more put my father and my Lady my Mother to
no cost nor business for that cause a good while after, which
causeth my heart to be full heavy; and if that ye come, and
the matter take to none effect, then should I be much more
sorry, and full of heaviness.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

And as for myself I have done and understand in the matter (all) that I can or may, as God knoweth; and I let you plainly understand, that my father will no more money part withal in that behalf, but an 100L and 50 marks, which is right far from the accomplishment of your desire.

Wherefore, if that ye could be content with that Good and my poor Person, I would be the merriest maiden on ground; and if ye think not yourself so satisfied, or that ye might have much more Good, as I have understood by you afore; good, true, and loving Valentine, that ye take no such labour upon you, as to come more for that matter, But let (what) is, pass, and never more to be spoken of, as I may be your true Lover and Beadwoman during my life.

No more unto you at this time, but Almighty Jesu preserve you both body and soul, etc.

By your Valentine,
Margery Brews.

iv

MARGARET PASTON TO ELIZABETH BREWS

(The mothers of Margery Brews and John Paston, the younger, were evidently doing their best to facilitate matters.)

June 1477

To the Right Worshipful and my very good Lady and
Cousin Dame Elizabeth Brews.

RIGHT worshipful, and my chief Lady and Cousin, as heartily as I can I recommend me to you; Madam, liketh you to understand that the chief cause of my writing to you at this season is this; I wot well it is not unremembered with you the large communication that divers times hath been had touching the marriage of my Cousin Margery your daughter and my son John, of which I have been as glad, and now latewards as sorry, as ever I was for any marriage in my life; and where or in whom the default of the breach is, I can have no perfect knowledge; but, Madam, if it be in me or any of mine, I pray you assign a day,

FIANCÉES

when my Cousin your husband and ye think to be at Norwich towards Sall, and I will come thither to you, and I think, ere ye and I depart, that the default shall be known where it is, and also that with your advice and help, and mine together, we shall take some way that it shall not break; for if it did, it were none honour to neither parties, and in chief to them in whom the default is, considering that it is so far spoken.

And Madam, I pray you that I may have perfect knowledge by my son (in law) Yelverton, bearer hereof, when this meeting shall be, if ye think it expedient, and the sooner the better in eschewing of worse; for, Madam, I know well if it be not concluded in right short time, that as for my son he intendeth to do right well by my Cousin Margery and not so well by himself, and that should be to me, nor I trust to you, no great pleasure, if it so fortunéd, as God defend, whom I beseech to send you your levest desires.

Madame, I beseech you that I may be recommended by this bill to my counsin your husband, and to my Cousin Margery, to whom I supposed to have given another name ere this time. Written at Mawtby on Saint Barnabas's (11th June).

By your
Margaret Paston.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

ABIGAIL SMITH TO JOHN ADAMS

John Adams, who became the second President of the United States, was a young lawyer in Boston when Abigail married him in October 1764. Her father was a Congregational minister of Weymouth, Mass. She was an influential woman in the time of the American Revolution. See also under Abigail Adams—"WIVES."

Thursday eve, Weymouth, 19 April, 1764.

WHY, my good man, thou hast the curiosity of a girl. Who could have believed, that only a slight hint would have set thy imagination agog in such a manner. And a fine encouragement I have to unravel the mystery as thou callest it. Nothing less, truly, than to be told something to my disadvantage. What an excellent reward that will be! In what court of justice did'st thou learn that equity? I thank thee, friend; such knowledge as that is easy enough to be obtained without paying for it. As to the insinuation, it doth not give me any uneasiness; for, if it is anything very bad, I know thou dost not believe it. I am not conscious of any harm that I have done or wished to any mortal. I bear no malice to any being. To my enemies, if any I have, I am willing to afford assistance; therefore towards man I maintain a conscience void of offence.

Yet by this I mean not that I am faultless. But tell me what is the reason, that persons would rather acknowledge themselves guilty than be accused by others? Is it because they are more tender of themselves, or because they meet with more favor from others when they ingenuously confess? Let that be as it will, there is something which makes it more agreeable to condemn ourselves than to be condemned by others.

But, although it is vastly disagreeable to be accused of faults, yet no person ought to be offended when such accusations are delivered in the spirit of friendship. I now call upon you to fulfil your promise, and tell me all my faults both of omission and commission, and all the evil you

FIANCÉES

either know or think of me. Be to me a second conscience, not put me off to a more convenient season. There can be no time more proper than the present. It will be harder to erase them when habit has strengthened and confirmed them. Do not think I trifle. These are really meant as words of truth and soberness. For the present, good night.

.

Friday morning, April 20th. (1764)

What does it signify? Why may I not visit you days as well as nights? I no sooner close my eyes, than some invisible being, swift as the Alborack of Mahomet, bears me to you—I see you, but cannot make myself visible to you. That tortures me, but it is still worse when I do not come, for I am then haunted by half a dozen ugly sprites. One will catch me and leap into the sea; another will carry me up a precipice like that which Edgar describes in *Lear*, then toss me down, and, were I not then light as the gossamer, I should shiver into atoms; another will be pouring down my throat stuff worse than the witches' broth in *Macbeth*. Where I shall be carried next I know not, but I would rather have the smallpox by inoculation half a dozen times than be sprited about as I am. What say you? Can you give me any encouragement to come? By the time you receive this I hope from experience you will be able to say that the distemper is but a trifle. Think you I would not endure a trifle for the pleasure of seeing you? Yes, were it ten times that trifle, I would. But my own inclinations must not be followed,—to duty I sacrifice them. Yet, O my mamma, forgive me if I say, you have forgot or never knew—but hush, and do you excuse me that something I promised you, since it was a speech more undutiful than that which I just now stopped myself in. For the present, good-bye.

Friday evening.

I hope you smoke your letters well before you deliver them. Mamma is so fearful lest I should catch the distemper, that she hardly ever thinks the letters are sufficiently purified. Did you never rob a bird's nest? Do you re-

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member how the poor bird would fly round and round, fearful to come nigh, yet not know how to leave the place? Just so they say I hover round Tom whilst he is smoking my letters.

But heyday, Mr. What's-your-name, who taught you to threaten so vehemently? "A character besides that of a critic, in which if I never did, I always hereafter shall fear you." Thou canst not prove a villain, impossible,—I, therefore, still insist upon it, that I neither do nor can fear thee. For my part, I know not that there is any pleasure in being feared; but, if there is, I hope you will be so generous as to fear your Diana, that she may at least be made sensible of the pleasure. Mr. Ayers will bring you this letter and the *bag*. Do not repine,—it is filled with balm.

Here is love, respects, regards, good wishes—a whole wagon load of them, sent you from all the good folks in the neighbourhood.

To-morrow makes the fourteenth day. How many more are to come? I dare not trust myself with the thought. Adieu. Let me hear from you by Mr. Ayers, and excuse this very bad writing; if you had mended my pen it would have been better. Once more, adieu. Gold and silver have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee,—which is the affectionate regard of your

A. S.

FIANCÉES

GABRIELE VON HUMBOLDT TO HEINRICH VON BULOW

Gabriele was the youngest daughter of the Minister of State, Wilhelm von Humboldt. Von Bulow, who was only nineteen in 1817, came to London as ambassador in 1827, when Gabriele, then his wife, proved to be his "right hand."

Schleiz,

April 23, 1817.

WE arrived here half an hour ago and I am taking advantage of the first free moment to write to you, my dear Heinrich, which gives me great pleasure. Ah, my dearest, how shall I describe to you how terribly painful the separation from you was and how empty and dreary everything seems since that moment! How I got in the carriage, I do not know myself; all I know is that the moment when I saw you for the last time and pressed you to my heart, seemed to me the most dreadful in my whole life, my senses seemed to reel and I had everything I could do not to lose consciousness. You can imagine how I long for a letter from you, my sweetest life, and yet I can scarcely hope to find one in Munich and God knows how long I must wait to receive even a sign of existence from you. To hear nothing from you for so long is really hard. Ah God! if only I could be with you in reality as I am in thought. Yet I will not complain and will leave it to fate to settle, I will summon up courage and strength and the All-mighty will assist me to bear this hard trial as he has assisted me in the past. Sometimes, however, the pain of separation from you overcomes me so terribly that I am hard put to it to bear up and not to give way to constant weeping. But I do all I possibly can to be strong and not to affect others. Poor Karoline has been ill again all day, she is really to be pitied; perpetually to suffer and to have no hope of a happier life in the future, which always strengthens and consoles the invalid in the dark hours, to be in such a plight and to have to reconcile oneself to one's lot, is truly unenviable. I feel like that sometimes myself;

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

I could really not endure these hard times so patiently, if I were not buoyed up by the sweet and happy prospect of living by your side very soon. Ah! I can never, never express what I feel when I think of entrusting my life and happiness to you and of belonging utterly to you one day. Yet I need not tell you, for you know full well how greatly and sincerely I love you, as I know you love me! Ah! what would my life be if this conviction did not form for me a constant support.

Good-night, my dearest one, I embrace you and am always

Your dear Gabriele.

FIANCÉES

CHARLOTTE CARPENTER TO WALTER SCOTT

Charlotte was engaged to the young Walter Scott in the autumn of 1797. She was the successor of the "pretty young woman" referred to in the opening of chapter twelve of *Peveril of the Peak*. The latter, a Miss Belches, married a banker after six years' friendship with Scott, who soon after met Miss Carpenter, a ward of Lord Downshire, at the little Cumberland watering-place of Gilsland, during a tour of the English lake district. The neighbourhood was described later in *Guy Mannering*.

i

(Oct. 1797.)

INDEED, Mr. Scott, I am by no means pleased with all this writing. I have told you how much I dislike it, and yet you still persist in asking me to write, and that by return of post.

O! you are really quite out of your senses. I should not have indulged you in that whim of yours, had you not given me that hint that my silence gives an air of mystery. I have no reason that can detain me in acquainting you that my father and my mother were French, of the name of Charpentier; he had a place under Government; their residence was at Lyons, where you would find on inquiries that they lived in good repute and in *very good style*. I had the misfortune of losing my father before I could know the value of such a parent. At his death we were left to the care of Lord D(ownshire), who was his very great friend; and very soon after, I had the affliction of losing my mother. Our taking the name of Carpenter was on my brother's going to India, to prevent any difficulties that might have occurred. I hope now you are pleased. Lord D(ownshire) could have given you every information, as he has been acquainted with all my family.

You say you almost love *him*; but until your *almost* comes to a *quite*, I cannot love *you*.

Before I conclude this famous epistle, I will give you a

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

little hint—that is, not to put so many *musts* in your letters—it is beginning *rather too soon*; and another thing is, that I take the liberty not to mind them much, but I expect you (? to) mind me.

You *must* take care of yourself, you *must* think of me and believe me

Yours sincerely,
C. C.

ii

(Acknowledging a Miniature.)

Carlisle, October 26 (1797).

I have only a minute before the post goes to assure you, my dear sir, of the welcome reception of the stranger. The very great likeness to a friend of mine will endear him to me; he shall be my constant companion, but I wish he could give me an answer to a thousand questions I have to make—one in particular, what reason have you for so many fears you express?

Have your friends changed? Pray let me know the truth—they perhaps don't like me *being French*. Do write immediately—let it be in better spirits. Et croyez moi toujours votre sincere

C. C.

iii

(Replying to a letter about money affairs.)

(Nov. 1797.)

You have made me very *triste* all day. Pray never more complain of being poor. Are you not ten times richer than I am? Depend on yourself and your profession. I have no doubt you will rise very high, and be a *great rich man*, but we should look down to be contented with our lot, and banish all disagreeable thoughts. We shall do very well. I am very sorry to hear you have such a *bad head*.

I hope I shall nurse away all your aches. I think you write too much. When I am *mistress*, I shall not allow it.

FIANCÉES

How very angry I should be if you were to part with *Lenore*. Do you really believe I should think it an unnecessary expense where your health and pleasure can be concerned? I have a better opinion of you, and I am very glad you don't give up the cavalry, as I love anything that is *stylish*.

Don't forget to find a stand for the old carriage, as I shall like to keep it, in case we should have to go any journey; it is so much more convenient than the post-chaises, and will do very well till we can keep *our carriage*.

What an idea of yours was that to mention where you wish to have your *bones laid*! If you were married, I should think you were tired of me. A very pretty compliment *before marriage*. I hope sincerely that I shall not live to see that day. If you always have those cheerful thoughts, how very pleasant and gay you must be.

Adieu, my dearest friend. Take care of yourself, if you love me, as I have *no wish* that you should visit that *beautiful and romantic scene*, the burying-place. Adieu, once more,

C. C.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

DOROTHY OSBORNE TO WILLIAM TEMPLE

Dorothy Osborne's father, Sir Peter Osborne, was a leading Royalist. William Temple's father, Sir John, sat in the Long Parliament. The lovers were thus kept apart by family political differences, even after the war, when Sir Peter had retired to Chicksands, his Bedfordshire seat. Sir John desired a more promising alliance for his son, and during the seven long years of the lovers' courtship, Dorothy was besieged by suitors, including Henry Cromwell. . . . Her correspondence with her absent fiancé reveals a rare and beautiful mind, but only some varied extracts from her letters can be given here.

i

Jan. 2, 1653.

IF there were anything in my letter that pleased you I am extremely glad on't, 'twas all due to you, and made it but an equal return for the satisfaction yours gave me. And whatsoever you may believe, I shall never repent the good opinion I have with so much reason taken up. But I forget myself; I meant to chide, and I think this is nothing towards it. Is it possible you came so near me as Bedford and would not see me? Seriously, I should not have believed it from another; would your horse had lost all his legs instead of a hoof, that he might not have been able to carry you further, and you, something that you valued extremely, and could not hope to find anywhere but at Chicksands. . . .

ii

(After a Visit to London.)

1653.

Sir.—I was so kind as to write to you by the coachman, and let me tell you I think 'twas the greatest testimony of my friendship that I could give you; for, trust me, I was so tired with my journey; so *dowd* with my cold, and so out of humour with our parting, that I should have done it with great unwillingness to anybody else. I lay abed

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all next day to recover myself, and rised a Thursday to receive your letter with the more ceremony. I found no fault with the ill-writing, 'twas but too easy to read, methought, for I am sure I had done much sooner than I could have wished. But, in earnest, I was heartily troubled to find you in so much disorder. I would not have you so kind to me as to be cruel to yourself, in whom I am more concerned. No; for God's sake, let us not make afflictions of such things as these; I am afraid we shall meet with too many real ones.

iii

(Rebuking his Jealousy)

. . . . If you have ever loved me, so not refuse the last request I shall ever make you, 'tis to preserve yourself from the violence of your passion. Vent it all upon me; call me and think me what you please; make me, if it be possible, more wretched than I am. I'll bear it without the least murmur. Nay, I deserve it all, for had you never seen me you had certainly been happy. . . . I am the most unfortunate woman breathing, but I was never false. No; I call Heaven to witness that if my life could satisfy for the least injury my fortune has done you I would lay it down with greater joy than any person ever received a crown; and if I ever forget what I owe you or ever entertain a thought of kindness for any person in the world besides, may I live a long and miserable life. 'Tis the greatest curse I can invent: if there be a greater, may I feel it. This is all I can say.

iv

(Friendship's Dues.)

. . . . In my opinion you do not understand the laws of friendship aright. 'Tis generally believed it owes its birth to an agreement and conformity of humours, and that it lives no longer than 'tis preserved by the mutual care of those that bred it. 'Tis wholly governed by equality, and can there be such a thing in it as distinction of power?

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

No, sure, if we are friends we must both command and both obey alike: indeed, a mistress and a servant sounds otherwise; but that is ceremony and this is truth. Yet what reason had I to furnish you with a stick to beat myself withal, or desire that you should command, that do it so severely? I must eat fruit no longer than I could be content you should be in a fever; is not that an absolute forbidding of me? It has frightened me just now from a basket of the most tempting cherries that e're I saw, though I know you did not mean that I should eat none. But if you had I think I should have obeyed you. . . .

v

(The Day's Occupations.)

Chicksands, May 1653.

. . . . You ask me how I pass my time here. I can give you a perfect account not only what I do for the present, but of what I am likely to do this seven years if I stay here so long. I rise in the morning reasonably early, and before I am ready I go round the house till I am weary of that, and then into the garden till it grows too hot for me. About ten o'clock I think of making me ready, and when that's done I go into my father's chamber, and from thence to dinner, where my cousin Mollie and I sit in great state in a room and at a table that would hold a great many more. After dinner we sit and talk till Mr. B. (a suitor of Dorothy's) comes in question, and then I am gone. The heat of the day is spent in reading or working, and about six or seven o'clock I walk out into a common that lies hard by the house, where a great many young wenches keep sheep and cows, and sit in the shade singing of ballads. I go to them and compare their voices and beauties to some ancient shepherdesses that I have read of, and find a vast difference there, but, trust me, I think these are as innocent as those could be. I talk to them, and find they want nothing to make them the happiest people in the world but the knowledge that they are so.

FIANCÉES

MARY BICKNELL TO JOHN CONSTABLE

Preliminary negotiations. They were married eventually, in October 1816. Like most famous painters, he was poor for a long time.

i

Spring Grove,

November 4, 1811.

MY dear Sir,—I have just received my father's letter. It is precisely such a one as I expected, reasonable and kind; his only objection would be on the score of that necessary evil money. What can we do? I wish I had it, but wishes are vain: we must be wise, and leave off a correspondence that is not calculated to make us think less of each other. We have many painful trials required of us in this life, and we must learn to bear them with resignation. You will still be my friend, and I will be yours; then as such let me advise you to go into Suffolk, you cannot fail to be better there. I have written to papa, though I do not in conscience think that he can retract anything he has said, if so, I had better not write to you any more, at least till I can coin. We should both of us be bad subjects for poverty, should we not? Even painting would go on badly, it could hardly survive in domestic worry.

By a sedulous attention to your profession you will very much help to bestow calm on my mind. . . . You will allow others to outstrip you, and then perhaps blame me. Exert yourself while it is yet in your power, the path of duty is alone the path of happiness. . . . Believe me, I shall feel a more lasting pleasure in knowing that you are improving your time, than I should do while you were on a stolen march with me round the Park. Still I am not heroine enough to say, wish, or mean that we should never meet. I know that to be impossible. But then, let us resolve it shall be but seldom; not as inclination, but as prudence shall dictate. Farewell, dearest John—may every blessing attend you, and in the interest I feel in your welfare, forgive the advice I have given you, who, I am sure are

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better qualified to admonish me. Resolution is, I think, what we now stand most in need of, to refrain for a time, for our mutual good, from the society of each other.

ii

July 30, 1816.

I think you may safely trust to my discretion, and then my dear John shall find me ready, if it is his decided wish, for another and far pleasanter journey.

iii

Sept. 15, 1816.

Papa is averse to everything I propose. If you please you may write to him; it will do neither good nor harm. I hope we are not going to do a very foolish thing. . . . Once more, and for the last time! it is not too late to follow Papa's advice, and *wait*. Notwithstanding all I have been writing, whatever you deem best I do. . . . This enchanting weather gives me spirits.

FIANCÉES

CLARA WIECK TO ROBERT SCHUMANN

Her marriage to the composer was delayed many years by her father, who doubted Schumann's ability to "support" his daughter. She was a brilliant pianist and greatly helped by her playing to popularise his compositions. Having permanently disabled one of his hands, he was unable to play them himself. After marriage, they were happy until Schumann's mind began to give way under ill health and melancholia. He died in an asylum in 1856.

i

Leipzig, 15 August, 1837.

YOU require but a simple "Yes"? Such a small word—but such an important one. But should not a heart so full of unutterable love as mine utter this little word with all its might? I do so and my innermost soul whispers always to you.

The sorrows of my heart, the many tears, could I depict them to you—oh no! Perhaps fate will ordain that we see each other soon and then—your intention seems risky to me and yet a loving heart does not take much count of dangers. But once again I say to you "Yes." Would God make my eighteenth birthday a day of woe? Oh no! that would be too horrible. Besides I have long felt "it must be," nothing in the world shall persuade me to stray from what I think right and I will show my father that the youngest of hearts can also be steadfast in purpose.

Your Clara.

ii

Leipzig, 26 Sept. 1837.

Do you still doubt me? I pardon you, yet I am a weak young girl, weak indeed, but I have a strong soul, a heart, moreover, that is firm and unchangeable. Let this be sufficient to banish any doubt.

I have been very unhappy but write me a word of

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

comfort under these lines and I will go out into the world without a care. I have promised father to be more cheerful and to live some further years for art and the world. You will hear much of me and will have many doubts; but when you hear this or that, think then, "She is doing all this for me!" Could you ever weaken? Well, if you did, you would have broken a heart which loved but once.

Clara.

iii

Karlsruhe, Feb. 2 1839.

. . . . I see now that I can exist in the world without my father and it will not be very long before I shall be with you.

A thousand greetings from your faithful bride,

Clara Schumann.

Oh what a beautiful name!

FIANCÉES

LYDIA FRASER TO HUGH MILLER

Lydia Mackenzie Fraser, a pretty bourgeoisie ten years younger than the stonemason who became the famous geologist, married him on 7th January 1837. Hugh Miller shot himself during a fit of insanity, in 1856.

MY own Hugh,—I am tired, tired of being away from you. You have no idea of the frivolous fashions to which sex and fashion subject us. I do nothing all day, and hear nothing, yet I am obliged to take the time from sleep which I devote to you.

Why, when I look at him, do I always think of you? Or why do his black, bright eyes, that would be fine had they meaning, always remind me of those gentle blue ones which I have so often seen melt with benevolence and a chastened tenderness? Why are mankind such slaves of appearances as to admire the casket and neglect the gem? It is degradation to the dignity of thought and sentiment to compare it with a mere beauty of form or colour. Good-bye.

It is morning, but I am not beside you on the leafy hill, with the blue water shimmering at our feet. When shall we be there again?

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

*KAROLINE FLACHSLAND TO
J. G. VON HERDER*

Herder, the eighteenth century German poet and critic, spent most of his life until Goethe helped him in 1776, struggling against the severest poverty. He owed a great deal to Karoline's consoling sympathy, though his poverty prevented their marriage for six years.

Frankfurt, Sept. 26, 1772.

I LEAN on your honest breast and heart and can do nothing but weep. To-day your third letter, angel of my life! I cannot restrain the tears which overwhelm me. Ah, what am I, poor girl, that you should love me so! what will become of me when I am at last with you, on your bosom, on your angel's breast. To hear and love you yourself, none else but you in the world! How can I comprehend it? You, you, dear Herder, will give me life and peace and a great new spirit, in a word, Heaven, yet I can give you nothing but true and faithful love. How anxious I am at times lest you discover me to be other than what you now think me. What will happen then? I feel both fearful and happy thinking of our meeting again. Eternal union of truest love—a noble life and merit. Oh God! am I worthy of that?—worthy of such a heavenly existence? It goes beyond all my thoughts and hopes! I am unable to speak of it, my worth seems nought, and your letters, most noble young man, are everything that Heaven and Elysium signify. Here are my empty, feeble longing arms, which a thousand times during the day I stretch out to you and entwine around your neck and with which I embrace every tree, which gives me shade and happiness imagining it is you who mean everything in the world to me. Oh! what it will mean to me to see you again, to clasp you in my arms. Your whole noble and sublime heart in my arms! We will, can and must live happily together, with the new strength and encouragement your presence will afford me. God will reward your noble heart. I can but kneel and pray for you. But I will employ all my strength to love you, there is nothing sweeter for me in the world. Oh! my golden

FIANCÉES

dreams, when will you come true? When will you, dear Herder, be able to escape from your wearisome solitude and situation just to see us for a few short days at least (indeed, my heart fails me when I think of your position in Buckenburg all alone). How much we should have to say to each other and I feel you must indeed see me to test your heart and decide whether I shall still please you when you are with me again. Ah, God! I await that like a death sentence. Can you visit us in the spring, dear friend, just for an opportunity of seeing and speaking to each other? Just to speak of our happy future home, of our love, of our eternal troth, deriving thus new courage and hope in each other's arms and from each other's heart. If only it is possible for you to do so, I beg you to come to me after the sad long winter, my sweetest, kindest friend, my only friend. Ah! how long the winter will seem to me! especially when I think of your loneliness. Oh, were it but over and we were able to start a new life together! But you will come in the spring?

What shall I say? You are awaiting a sign from me, you want to know my soul's desire? What shall I say to you, angel of my life? Do you not know that you are free to act as you wish, that I submit entirely to your wishes and guidance? That I will eat black bread and drink pure water with you in a poor, low cottage, and will feel as happy and perhaps happier than amidst the world's luxury? Ah! why are we not nearer to each other so that my Herder need not enquire whether my heart understands him? Good God, never let me sink so low as to doubt the great heart and noble soul of my dear Herder! Say, oh say, dear angel of God, what your heart desires, hopes for, and wills. You know that I will listen to your decision with peace and satisfaction, even if it exiles us another long year, which God forbid! Oh! if only I could guide your life and plans, and had the power to soften the people who surround you, I would fly to you at once and console and tend you, like a good wife, but alas! all power to do good in the world is denied me! None the less, let us hope and not be disconsolate and let us love, then how rich and precious will our life be, and our reward unutterably great!

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

KAROLINE VON FEUCHTERSLEBEN TO JEAN PAUL RICHTER

The famous Jean Paul was in Weimar, visiting the Herders, when he and Karoline von Feuchtersleben first met. The engagement which followed on their instant friendship was eventually broken off, before the end of 1800.

i

Hildburghausen, Jan. 31 1800.

DEAREST! I am yours! Oh! receive my soul and love me for ever and ever, as I do you! An hour ago came the dear, longed-for letters, which determine our life's happiness. Thank you, oh dearest one, a thousand thanks for your consideration, for your kindness and your love! A thousand thanks to the dear Herders for their warm, true friendship! To-day I have no words to utter, only love! But so that I may not delay your happiness and joy by even a minute, let me hasten with all speed to give you the assurance that my whole soul and existence are yours before all the world. The consent of our mother, if not directly from herself, you will receive from my uncle, but there may be a delay as the letters have to travel to and fro first.

Oh my beloved Richter, we shall be most happy together! God bless us both! I esteem and love you unutterably and will make you as happy as possible through my love. I cannot write, soon you will hear all about me and my hopes. I am in good health, happiness and joy will assure my good health.

Farewell and be joyful and happy as is
Your Caroline.

ii

Oh beloved one! Everything is ringing in my head so loudly and joyfully. Waking this morning, I dreamt again the beautiful dream. Ah! if only I were with you, I could take care of you so to-day! You angel, dear, only loved one! I cling closely to your breast, dearest, love always and always.

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ROSA FERRUCCI TO GAETANO

Rosa Ferrucci, an Italian writer and mystic, and daughter of a poetess, was twenty-one years old in 1856. She died the next year, before the projected marriage. The following letters are translated from "*Rosa Ferrucci e Alcuni Suoi Scritti*," *Tipografia Barbera Bianchi*, 1858, by her mother.

i

Pisa, 23 June 1856.

I THANK you for your kind intention to come to Pisa on Wednesday. Although my birthday is always a solemn and joyous event, yet this year I shall regard it as more sacred than ever, being under a sense of deeper gratitude to God, and feeling that I must thank him for all the favours which he has heaped on me all my life and particularly of late. . . .

I am not ready to marry you at once, because, however much I love you, I do not wish to experience now the pain that will surely be mine when I leave my parental home.

I would be willing to make it eleven months instead of fifteen and I assure you that this would be a real proof of affection, for the sacrifice of four months of intimate life with the most affectionate of mothers is a supreme one; nevertheless, I am willing to make it for your sake.

Rosa.

ii

15 Sept. 1856.

Just as yesterday I was full of joy, so to-day I am sad. Your being far away, the thought of my inevitable separation from mama and the child, all this has caused me to become despondent and to weep.

Poor women. We are frailer than the leaves, which every impetuous gust of wind disturbs and scatters; and when the youth of our poor hearts, which know but to love, and suffer, is finished, we are divided between a thousand thoughts,

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pleasant and sad. But forgive me, oh God, for I should not be sad, but should thank thee.

I open my mind to you, my Gaetano, for you must be the comfort and guidance of my future life, you must divine every thought, disperse all my vain fears, advise and aid me always. I will not conceal from you that my future state has quickened my affections so that, thinking of it, I become alternately sad and happy, as never before. But what would you? I do not know at all how I shall be able to tear myself from the arms of her who has reared me with such care and loved me so dearly. But enough for to-day. I cannot speak of mama any more because my eyes are full of tears. I cannot understand myself. I wish to curb my sensibility and then my heart overpowers my reason.

Dear, October is approaching. If then I shall be unable to enjoy the country holiday myself, I shall nevertheless think with pleasure of the delight it will afford you. You will see your mountains again, and the pine-woods which I have gazed on since childhood with such rapture, and surrounded by the flowers, the grass and the beautiful trees, you will be turned in thought to the Creator of all; you will admire and love the wonderful creations of the Power which has this year revealed to you a new life, which I fervently hope will be free from tribulation. Oh, how much the love of God grows in us when we contemplate the marvels of nature! How we ought always to prove by our actions and thoughts our deepest sense of gratitude to God, in whom our lives should be wholly bound up. He who is so bountiful gives not only the dew and the rain to the parched fields, the leaves to the trees, flowers to the meadow, but vouchsafes us solace in every affliction because in him our nature reposes.

I have spoken of God because I feel that thinking of him gives such comfort and aid to our lives.

Ever thine,
Rosa.

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HELENE VON DONNIGES TO FERDINAND LASSALLE

She did not marry Lassalle, chiefly owing to the violent opposition of her family. She met him first in 1863. Not long after this letter was written the famous German Socialist challenged her new admirer to a duel, and fell mortally wounded.

Wabern, Tuesday evening, 26 July 1864.

AND now your beautiful, glorious spirit, and your great, but nevertheless welcome, vanity knows how my decision shapes itself. I wish to be and will be your wife! Yesterday evening you said to me, "Let me hear just a reasonable, clear, 'Yes,' et 'Je me charge du reste.'"—Well, my "yes" is there—chargez vous donc du reste; I make but a couple of small conditions et les voilà. I wish, think you, the child says, I wish—I wish, then, that we should do all we can, and you, my fine, satanical friend, can do a monstrous lot—to attain our object in a respectable and reasonable manner; that means: You come to us and we try to prepossess my parents in your favour as well as — and thus obtain their consent. If not, they will be and will remain inexorable, even though we may have done all we could—eh biens alors tant pis! That is my first condition. And here is the second. I want the whole thing to be done as quickly as possible. For at the moment I can withstand the fog and rain without excessive distress—but the exciting days and tumult of voices I have experienced on account of our affair, that, my friend, is too much for my nerves. But I have an additional reason for this haste. I do not want the whole world to discuss us and to express their opinions upon a matter, which has nothing to do with them, thus exposing me to innumerable scenes, which it would be preferable to avoid. Once the matter is carried through to our satisfaction, they will then be at liberty to screech as loudly as they wish, for then I will have you, Ferdinand, as protection and safeguard—et je ne me moque pas mal du reste du monde. I know that the obstacles

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which we have to surmount are veritable giants, but we have a giant's aim, and you have a giant's spirit, which with God's help will pulverise the rocks ahead to dust and powder in such manner that my weak breath will scatter them. The hardest task lies before me, however. I must break, in cold blood, a heart which is faithfully devoted to me, I must destroy, with egoistic unfeelingness, a beautiful dream of youth, which, if realised, would mean the happiness, the life's joy, of a noble being. Believe me, that will be very difficult for me to do, but now and always I will do even harm for your sake. Write to me immediately, for only when I know your plans and your firm decision, when I have learned the commands and wishes of my lord and master, can I bring my own to fruition.

H. D.

FIANCÉES

ESTHER VANHOMRIGH (VANESSA) TO SWIFT

"Vanessa" was the daughter of Mrs. Vanhomrigh, the rich widow in whose home Swift was a guest. She fell in love with him, and believed herself engaged to him. Swift had already corresponded lovingly with "Stella," Esther Johnson, an earlier pupil. His marriage to Stella broke Vanessa's heart.

i

London, Sept. 1, 1712.

HAD I a correspondent in China, I might have had an answer by this time. . . You must needs be extremely happy where you are to forget your absent friends, and I believe you have formed a new system and think there is no more of this world passing your sensible horizon.

If this be your notion, I must excuse you, if not, you can plead no other excuse; and if it be, sir, I must reckon myself of another world; but I shall have much ado to be persuaded till you send me some convincing arguments of it. Don't dally in a thought of the consequence, but demonstrate that 'tis possible to keep up a correspondence between friends though in different worlds, and assure one another, as I do you, that I am your most obedient and most humble servant,

E. Vanhomrigh.

ii

London, June 1713.

'Tis inexpressible the concern I am in ever since I heard that your head is so much out of order. Who is your physician? For God's sake, don't be persuaded to take many slops. Satisfy me so much as to tell me what medicines you have taken and do take. How did you find yourself while a ship-board? I fear 'tis your voyage has discomposed you, and then so much business following so immediately before you had time to recruit—'twas too much. . . . If I talk impertinently I know you have goodness enough to forgive me, when you consider how great an ease 'tis to

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me to ask these questions, though I know it will be a great while before I can be answered: I am sure I shall think it so. Oh! what would I give to know how you do at this instant! My fortune is too hard, your absence was enough without this cruel addition. Sure the powers above are envious of your thinking so well, which makes them at some times strive to interrupt you. But I must confine my thoughts, or, at least, stop from telling them to you, or you'll chide, which will still add to my uneasiness.

I have done all that was possible to hinder myself from writing to you, till I heard you were better, for fear of breaking my promise, but 'tis all in vain, for had I vowed neither to touch pen, ink, nor paper, I certainly should have had some other invention; therefore I beg you won't be angry with me for doing what it is not in my power to avoid. . . . I am impatient to the last degree to hear how you are: I hope I shall soon have you here.

iii

Dublin, 1714.

Well! now I plainly see how great a regard you have for me. You bid me be easy and you'd see me as often as you could; you had better have said as often as you could get the better of your inclinations so much, or as often as you remembered there was such a person in the world.

If you continue to treat me as you do, you will not be made uneasy by me long. 'Tis impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last; I am sure I could have *born* (sic) the rack much better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die without seeing you more, but these resolves to your misfortune did not last long; for there is something in human nature that prompts one so to find relief in this world, I must give way to it and beg you'd see me, and speak kindly to me, for I am sure you would not condemn anyone to suffer what I have done could you but know it.

The reason I write to you is because I cannot tell it you, should I see you, for when I begin to complain, then you

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are angry and there is something in your look so awful that it strikes me dumb.

Oh! that you may but have so much regard for me left that this complaint may touch your soul with pity.

I say as little as ever I can. Did you but know what I thought, I am sure it would move you.

Forgive me, and believe me I cannot help telling you this and live.

iv

How many letters must I send you before I shall receive an answer? Can you deny me in my misery the only comfort which I can expect at present? Oh that I could hope to see you here, or that I could go to you. I was born with violent passions which terminate all in one inexpressible passion I have for you. Consider the killing emotions which I feel from your neglect, and show some tenderness for me, or I shall lose my senses. . . . I firmly believe could I know your thoughts (which no human creature is capable of guessing at, because never anyone living thought like you), I should find you have often in a rage wished me religious, hoping then I should have paid my devotions to Heaven; but that would not spare you, for were I an enthusiast, still you'd be the deity I should worship. What marks are there of a deity, but what you are to be known by. You are at present everywhere; your dear image is always before mine eyes. Is it not more reasonable to adore a radiant form one has seen than one only described?

v

(Vanessa's last letter.)

. . . . Cad,—I thought you had quite forgot both me and your promise of writing to me. Was it not very unkind to be five weeks absent without sending me one line to let me know you were well and remembered me?

. . . . One day this week I was to visit a great lady where I found a very great assembly of ladies and beaux (dressed, as I suppose, to a nicety). . . . Their forms and gestures

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were very like those of baboons and monkeys. . . . While I was wishing myself in the country with ——, one of these animals snatched my fan, and was so pleased with me, that it seized me with such a panic that I apprehended nothing less than being carried up to the top of the house, and served as a friend of yours was, but in this —— one of their own species came in, upon which they all began to make their grimaces, which opportunity I took, and made my escape. . . .

I do declare I have so little joy in life, that I don't care how soon mine ends. For God's sake, write me soon, and kindly, for in your absence your letters are all the joy I have on earth, and sure you are too good-natured to grudge one hour in a week to make any human creature happy. . . .

Cad, think of me and pity me.

FIANCÉES

ANNE BOLEYN TO HENRY THE EIGHTH

An early love letter, after the King had started divorce proceedings against Catherine of Aragon, in 1527.

SIR,—It belongs only to the august mind of a great King, to whom Nature has given a heart full of generosity towards the sex, to repay by favours so extraordinary an artless and short conversation with a girl. Inexhaustible as is the treasury of your Majesty's bounties, I pray you to consider that it cannot be sufficient to your generosity for if you recompense so slight a conversation by gifts so great, what will you be able to do for those who are ready to consecrate their entire obedience to your desires? How great soever may be the bounties I have received, the joy that I feel in being loved by a King whom I adore, and to whom I would with pleasure make a sacrifice of my heart, if fortune had rendered it worthy of being offered to him, will ever be infinitely greater.

The warrant of Maid of Honour to the Queen induces me to think that your Majesty has some regard for me, since it gives me the means of seeing you oftener and of assuring you by my own lips (which I shall do on the first opportunity), that I am,

Your Majesty's very obliged and very obedient servant,
without any reserve,
Anne Boleyn.

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LUISE ADELGUNDE KULMUS TO J. C. GOTTSCHEDIN

Luise was a writer, and her future husband a philosopher and critic. This may account for the philosophical tone of her correspondence.

Danzig, March 1st, 1735.

BEST of Friends,—You do well to describe our love as philosophic. It differs from those, only too common, free unions, although it has become customary to apply to them the same appellation. Our hearts were already joined although we observed the outward ceremony of our engagement. It was for the sake of others that we confirmed our union in the conventional way. Yet how often does it happen that alliances are broken in spite of observing the most solemn ceremonies! How often are such alliances, in spite of such ceremonies, cancelled and brought to nought by courts spiritual and temporal.

Such accident cannot touch us: where two hearts have been made for each other, how can separation ever be possible? My virtuous friend, of you I expect the finest, and for myself, I will guarantee everything, for I have no slightest desire to trouble myself by any surmises as to such a mournful possibility as a change of mind. With impatience I wait for you; will you approve of the economical arrangements I have made? I think all superfluous display and squandering of resources which takes place only too often at such festivals, is quite unnecessary for us.

A reasonable thriftiness is a necessity of a well ordered household, and one cannot begin exercising it too soon for prudence. How many people squander a year's income in a few hours on such an occasion! Our wedding will not cost more than a hundred thalers (about £16). I have not spent much more than this on the things we really need, and we have to incur unavoidable expenses in making a long journey. We must think of the furnishing in Leipzig, and the essential requirements which cannot be reduced; so I have tried to draw the line at necessities which are

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fanciful and superfluous. There will be not more than eighteen people to witness our festival, but the whole town to see our happiness.

In case your respected parents, owing to their advanced age and delicate state of health, are unable to attend, please beseech them to bestow on us their blessing; God will not deny this to His faithful servant's children. There will come at last, after such tedious waiting, the happy moment when I embrace you in pure tenderness, and am able to assure you by my bliss that for me there is no earthly happiness other than to be all yours.

Kulmus.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

JANE WELSH TO THOMAS CARLYLE

(They were married on 17th October 1826.)

Templand, Tuesday, 3 Oct., 1826.

UNKIND that you are ever to suffer me to be cast down, when it is so easy a thing for you to lift me to the Seventh Heaven! My soul was darker than midnight when your pen said, "Let there be light," and there *was* light, as at the bidding of the Word. And now I am resolved in spirit and even joyful, joyful even in the face of the dreaded ceremony, of *starvation*, and every possible fate.

Oh, my dearest Friend! be always *so* good to me, and I shall make the best and happiest Wife. When I read in your looks and words that you love me, I feel it in the deepest part of my soul; then I care not one jot for the whole Universe beside; but when you fly from my caresses to—smoke tobacco, or speak of me as a new *circumstance* of your lot—then indeed my "heart is troubled about many things."

My Mother is not come yet, but is expected this week; the week following must be given to her to take a last look at her Child; and then, Dearest, God willing, I am your own for ever and ever.

This day fortnight would suit *me* better than Thursday; for, you know, after the proclaiming one is not fit to be seen, and therefore the sooner we get away the better. But then it would not suit—the Carriers?—unless perhaps you could send your things the week before, or leave them to follow after you. However, the difference of two days is of no such moment in my mind that you may not fix whichever *you* find most convenient. So determine and let me know.

With respect to the proclamation, I am grieved to say I can give you no comfort; for not only must you be proclaimed like any common man, in your own Parish, but send a line from the Minister, certifying you *unmarried*, before they will proclaim us here. . . .

Will you and John come here the night before, or not? Whichever way you like. If you come, I have a notion I

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will not see you; but I cannot say positively at this distance. Oh mercy! What I would give to be sitting in our doll's-house, married for a week!

Have you spoken to Jane yet about coming to us? and will she trust herself to my sisterly care? I would not have her for a month or two—till I have got over the first awkwardness of such a change, and my wits are recovered from the bewilderment of the new world about me, sufficiently to look to her welfare. Surely we should feel happier for having the good little creature with us; and the arrangement, I trust, would not be without benefit to herself. For my own share in it, I engage to be a true kind Sister to her, and an instructor as far as I can. Tell her this, if you see good; and give her a kiss in my name. I may well return *one* out of *twenty*. But indeed, Dear, these kisses on paper are scarcely worth keeping. You gave me one on my neck that night you were in such good-humour, and once on my lips on some forgotten occasion, that I would not part with for a hundred thousand paper ones. Perhaps some day or other, I shall get none of either sort: *sic transit gloria mundi!* . . .

There came a Letter from my pretty Cousin, Phoebe Baillie, the other night, almost sentimental, for a wonder. The Girl has taken it into her head, and not without reason, that my grave Help-mate will hardly be able to endure her; so she conjures us, in all seriousness, not to discard her utterly, and thereby blast her hopes of ever becoming more wise. You will surely let me teach her German, Dear? I promised, and you would not have me break my word. Besides, the poor little soul has none to speak one true word to her but only me, and her follies, I would fain persuade myself, are more of education than of nature. But you shall see her in good time, and judge for yourself; and then, not my will be done, but thine. I am going to be really a very meek-tempered Wife. Indeed, I am begun to be meek-tempered already. My Aunt tells me she could live forever with *me* without quarrelling—I am so reasonable and equal in my humour. There is something to gladden your heart withal! And more than this; my Grandfather observed

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

while I was supping my porridge last night, that "She was really a douce peaceable body that *Pen!*" So you perceive, my good Sir, the fault will be wholly your own if we do not get on most harmoniously together. My Grandfather has been particularly picturesque these two days. On coming downstairs on Sunday evening, I found him poring over *Wilhelm Meister!* "A strange choice," I observed, by way of taking the first word with him, "for Sunday reading." But he answered me quite sharply, "Not at all, Miss; the Book is a very *good* Book; it is all about David and Goliath"! But I must stop. And this is my last Letter! What a thought! How terrible, and yet full of bliss! You will love me forever, will you not, my own Husband? And I will always be your true and affectionate

Jane Welsh.

FIANCÉES

LADY MARY PIERREPONT TO E. WORTLEY MONTAGU, ESQ.

Lady Mary Pierrepont, daughter of the first Duke of Kingston, became a noted wit and beauty, friend of Pope, Addison and Swift. She married Edward Wortley-Montagu in 1712, at the age of 22, in opposition to her family, by eloping. Her husband became Ambassador at the Porte, and she accompanied him and wrote her famous "Letters from the East."

i

(A Tiff with her Lover.)

1710.

INDEED, I do not at all wonder that absence, and variety of faces, should make you forget me; but I am a little surprised at your curiosity to know what passes in my heart (a thing wholly insignificant to you), except you propose to yourself a piece of ill-natured satisfaction in finding me very much disquieted.

Pray, which way would you see into my heart? You can frame no guesses about it from either my speaking or writing; and supposing I should attempt to show it you, I know no other way. I begin to tire of my humility; I have carried my complaisance to you farther than I ought. You make new scruples, you have a great deal of fancy, and your distrusts being all of your own making, are more immovable than if there was some real ground for them. . . . 'Tis a piece of vanity and injustice I never forgive in a woman, to delight to give pain; what must I think of a man who takes pleasure in making me uneasy? After the folly of letting you know it is in your power, I ought in prudence to let this go no farther, except I thought you had a good nature enough never to make use of the power. I have no reason to think so; however, I am willing, you see, to do you the highest obligation 'tis possible for me to do; that is, to give you a fair occasion of being rid of me.

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ii

(March, 1711.)

Though your letter is far from what I expected, having once promised to answer it, with the sincere account of my inmost thoughts I am resolved you shall not find me worse than my word, which is (whatever you may think) inviolable.

'Tis no affectation to say that I despise the pleasure of pleasing people whom I despise: all the fine equipages that shine in the ring never gave me another thought, than either pity or contempt for the owners, that could place happiness in attracting the eyes of strangers. Nothing touches me with satisfaction but what touches my heart, and I should find more pleasure in the secret joy I should feel, at a kind expression from a friend I esteemed, than at the admiration of a whole playhouse, or the envy of those of my own sex, who could not attain to the same number of jewels, fine clothes, etc., supposing I was at the very summit of this sort of happiness.

You may be this friend if you please: did you really esteem me, had you any tender regard for me, I could, I think, pass my life in any station, happier with you, than in all the grandeur of the world with any other. You have some humours, that would be disagreeable to any woman that married with an intention of finding her happiness abroad. That is not my resolution. If I marry, I propose to myself a retirement; there is few of my acquaintance I should ever wish to see again; and the pleasing one, and only one, is the way in which I design to please myself. Happiness is the natural design of all the world; and everything we see done, is meant in order to attain it. My imagination places it in friendship. By friendship, I mean an entire communication of thoughts, wishes, interests, and pleasures, being undivided; a mutual esteem, which naturally carries with it a pleasing sweetness of conversation, and terminates in the desire of making one or another happy, without being forced to run into visits, noise, and hurry, which serve rather to trouble, than compose the thoughts of any reasonable creature. There are few capable of a

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friendship such as I have described, and 'tis necessary for the generality of the world to be taken up with trifles. Carry a fine Lady or a fine Gentleman out of town, and they know no more what to say. To take from them plays, operas, and fashions, is taking away all their topics of discourse; and they know not how to form their thoughts on any other subjects. They know very well what it is to be admired, but are perfectly ignorant of what it is to be loved. I take you to have sense enough, not to think this science romantic: I rather choose to use the word friendship than love; because in the general sense that word is spoke, it signifies a passion rather founded on fancy than reason: and when I say friendship, I mean a mixture of friendship and esteem and which a long acquaintance increases, not decays; how far I deserve such a friendship, I can be no judge of myself: I may want the good sense that is necessary to be agreeable to a man of merit, but I know I want the vanity to believe I have; and can promise you shall never like me less, upon knowing me better; and that I shall never forget that you have a better understanding than myself.

And now let me entreat you to think (if possible) tolerably of my modesty after so bold a declaration: I am resolved to throw off reserve, and use me ill if you please. I am sensible to own an inclination for a man is putting one's self wholly in his power: but sure you have generosity enough not to abuse it. After all I have said, I pretend no tie but on your heart: if you do not love me, I shall not be happy with you; if you do, I need add no further. I am not mercenary, and would not receive an obligation that comes not from one who loves me. I do not desire my letter back again: you have honour and I dare trust you. I am going to the same place I went last spring. I shall think of you there: it depends upon you in what manner.

M. P.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

iii

(The last word before elopement)

Friday night, 15th August, 1712.

I tremble for what we are doing. Are you sure you will love me for ever? Shall we never repent? I fear and I hope.

I foresee all that will happen on this occasion. I shall incense my family in the highest degree. The generality of the world will blame my conduct, and the relations and friends of —— will invent a thousand stories of me. Yet, 'tis possible you may recompense everything to me.

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MARGARITTA (MRS. FITZHERBERT) TO FREDERIC AUGUSTUS, PRINCE OF WALES

The Prince, afterwards George IV, then twenty-three, had just abandoned Mrs. Robinson, when he became enamoured of Mrs. Fitzherbert, a widow of thirty. His marriage to a Roman Catholic, and in secret, caused a great uproar, and an Act of Parliament made the marriage invalid. The Prince was subsequently married to Caroline of Brunswick.

i

(1830.)

“Princes, like woman, find few real friends ;
All who approach them their own ends pursue,
Lovers and ministers are seldom true.”

So spake a bard—well used to Courts and my sex—to you, my ***** (Prince), I ought, agreeable to the style of those who surround you, to pay an implicit obedience, and meet you as you desired on my quitting the ball-room last night. Meet you!—what you?—the ***** (Prince) of ***** (Wales)! whose character in the annals of gallantry is too well known for me to suppose that after such a meeting—I should have any character at all. This may be too free—I am unused to address people of excessive rank—my manners are unaffected—I know not a sentiment that I would wish to disguise, and I should be happy to know only that behaviour from your ***** (Royal) ***** (Highness) that must command silent respect from—Your father’s affectionate subject,

Margaritta.

ii

Public calumny I am above—my own reasons and observation are the charms that forbid a private meeting—already has the notice bestowed on me at the ball by your ***** brought on me the envy of my own sex, and the impertinence of yours. I like not your associates,

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

particularly that wild man, H*****, he stares me out of countenance, the difference of our rank in life forbids a further knowledge of me, I entreat you to avoid me, I shall be to-night at the ball, not because I like it, but my not having appeared since the last is, I find, observed; and some of our visitors yesterday told me I was too much engaged by the *****'s notice, to bestow any on those beneath him! Come to the ball—dance with Lady C***** B*****, and take the slightest notice of me. Why do you wish to take more? There are a hundred much prettier women! Mrs. O*****, for example—you think her pretty—she is indeed divine! and she has a husband, an officer of spirit, to shield her from the rude attacks of envy. You may enjoy her conversation—she yours—and malice dare not speak—but *me*, an unprotected helpless orphan? It will be cruel to pursue the Humble

Margaritta.

iii

Surprised that I was not at the ball! Recollect your letter in the morning—it is *impossible to see you with indifference*; what then was I to expect! No one thing that I wish'd. . . . You imagine I doubt not that my vanity would have been so well gratified, that reason would have been silent. Had I suffered the woman wholly to prevail, this must have been the case; but a thousand combining circumstances have almost quell'd the foibles of my sex, and vanity you must suppose dead in me—when I withdraw thus from your notice. And yet I wish your friendship—am deeply interested in your fame, and desire most ardently that you may be as eminent in goodness as in rank. I cannot receive your visits, the family I am with would leave the place immediately on such an event. They are what the world calls extreme good people—what I should call outrageous. They are not of the number of your friends.

Your first unfortunate vote in the house—against our gracious S***** (Sovereign)—they will never forgive, and it is vain that I urge the impetuosity of youth, that love

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of independence so natural to all—that from reason you gave not that vote;—I dare believe you never thought about it. F** (Fox) desired it, and you was glad to *appear* to have a will of your own.

But why enter I into politics, yet you make me a politician. I was violent for P*** (Pitt)—I now dislike him, but like not F** notwithstanding. A man of bad private character—though of the greatest talents and blest with uncommon genius—can never deserve the love of a worthy heart.

I air'd* last night to L****, and paid a very stupid visit, yet was I not dissatisfied. It was a proper sacrifice to prudence. I am now going a sailing. Our party is large, the day is fine, and the gale favourable. If you write again be cautious how your letter is given me. I think it needless to desire you to destroy mine. They have no merit to entitle them to preservation; and as they are not directed or signed with my real name, I think they can never be made public. Yet I am not without fear. Such trash would be a treasure to the printer, and the very initials of your name would sell a book wonderfully.

Adieu.

iv

I was drawn to the Steine this evening by a party who drank tea with us and would not excuse me (tho' I was really too ill to go out) because it was generally believed that your ***** in imitation of a ridiculous Frenchman, was to run a race backwards! Oh! that you had a Mentor to guard you from those numerous perils that around you wait!—the greatest of which are your present companions. As I beheld you the other day like another Harry:

“Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into your seat,
As if an angel dropt down from the clouds;
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus.
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.”

* Went out.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

I could not avoid continuing the comparison, and wishing that you would sometimes use that Prince's words:

"Reply not to me with a fool born jest,
For Heaven doth know, so shall the world perceive;
That I have turn'd away my former self,
So will I those that kept me company."

Adieu!—if I am too free, remember it is your own condescension that draws on you the remarks of

Margaritta.

v

"'Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb
In the dead carrion."

It is the answer of a King to your quotation, and I can make no better; Shakespeare is indeed a very great favourite of mine; he paints all his characters so much to the life, that every line of his is interesting to me. I confess the three plays of the Henry's are more particularly so. You say you have read the first part of *Henry IV* with attention, see you not a strange similarity in Hal!—sweet Hal; the present values himself that his companions are *mostly* men of rank and family; when I have urged this by way of excuse I have been told—so much the worse—they will not be so soon shaken off, they must be provided for, for they are not all needy men.

I desire no answer to all this: I am unfit for a Mentor; you compliment too highly in your wish that I would become one.

Seek me not, I entreat you, forget, or remember that I am *only* the haughty

Margaritta.

vi

You will compel me to leave B***** (Brighton), I am offended at your behaviour of last night. Why did I seek a walk retired? Had we met on the Steine you would have been more guarded; alas! you have not the delicacy I

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wished! When you talk of love, you offer an insult you are insensible of—your friendship confers honour;—but your love—retain it for some worthy fair, born to the high honour of becoming your wife, and repine not that fate has placed my lot—in humble life. I am content with my station; content has charms that are not to be expressed. I know I am wrong in continuing this correspondence;—it must—it ought to cease: write therefore no more to

Margaritta.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

LADY AUGUSTA MURRAY TO PRINCE AUGUSTUS

Prince Augustus, son of George III, afterwards became Duke of Sussex. Lady Augusta, a daughter of the Countess of Dunmore, was seven years the Prince's senior. Prince Augustus met her in Rome, fell desperately in love, and secured an English clergyman, Mr. Gunn, who was prevailed upon to marry them.

i

March, 1793.

THEN, my treasure, you say you will talk of honour to him. There is no honour in the case; if there *is*, I will not marry you. I love you, and I have reason to hope and believe you love me; but honour in the sense you take it is out of the question.

I cannot bear to owe my happiness to anything but affection; and all promises, though sacred in our eyes and in those of heaven, shall not oblige you to do anything towards me that can in the least prejudice your future interests.

As for honour, with the meaning Mr. Gunn will annex to it, I am ashamed to fancy it—he will imagine I have been your mistress, and that humanity, commonly termed honour, now induces you to pity me, and so veil my follies by an honourable marriage.

My own beloved Prince, forgive me if I am warm on this subject. I wish you to feel you owe me nothing; and whatever I owe you, I wish to owe to your love, and to your good opinion, but to no other principle.

Tell Mr. Gunn, my own Augustus, that you love me—that you are resolved to marry me—that you have pledged your sacred word; tell him, if you please, that upon the Bible you have sworn it—that I have done the same, and nothing shall ever divide us; but don't let him imagine that I have been vile. Do this only, my love; but pray take care of the character of your wife, of your Augusta.

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ii

My treasure, my dearest life and love, how can I refuse you? And yet dare I trust to the happiness your letter promised me? You shall come if you wish it. You shall do as you like; my whole soul rejoices in the assurances of your love, and to your exertions I will trust.

I will send to ——; but I fear the badness of the night will prevent his coming. My mother has ordered her carriage at past seven, and will not, I fear, be out before the half-hour after.

To be yours to-night, seems a dream that I cannot make out; the whole day have I been plunged in misery, and now to awake to joy is a felicity that is beyond my ideas of bliss. I doubt its success; but do as you will; I am what you will; your will must be mine, and no will can ever be dearer to me, more mine, than that of my Augustus, my lover, my all.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

RAHEL LEVIN TO COUNT KARL FRIEDRICH ALBRECHT FINCKENSTEIN

Rahel Levin (1771-1883) is known for her circle of friends, which included many writers and artists. She was a Jewess and embraced Christianity in 1815. She became a Florence Nightingale of Germany in 1831 by her work in the pestilence. Her early love affair with Finckenstein was quashed by his relatives. She subsequently married Karl Varnhagen von Euse.

i

(Berlin) 30 Oct., 1799.

A QUARTER of an hour ago, Better brought me your letter and Wiesel's enclosed with it. You have quite disillusioned me now. I should like to state—but my destiny is to vanish. Mere prudence one would have thought would have dissuaded you from sending me such a letter! You venture even to send it with Wiesel's, a stranger's! You really advise me to come to Vienna. No thank you, I beg to be excused! One would take more trouble to dissemble to the most wretched, remotest, fourth or fifth-hand mistress, if she had become importunate, than you have to deceive me. Fear nothing, I am too poor to come, and if ever I have the means, I do not refer to money, but to the strength necessary, I would come because I wished to, because I wanted to see you, I would not be kept away, though I could not imagine myself coming for your sake. You have once again trampled on me. Do not think I have any illusions. I let Better read your letter and said nothing more than, "If only I had not read it, and I would not have done so, had it not been received by express delivery." She replied innocently, "Well, you have learnt nothing new, and the letter is quite without importance." I belong to death; this was all that was wanting! I did not wish to read the letter, as I fear to read any letter from you. You, of course, won't recall it; you will think it was written in haste and everything has been

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arranged here, I am now so sensitive and easily hurt. But you cannot think so, and that you cannot is my misfortune and explains everything. Oh, it was so cold, so hurtful, it caused me such pain. Ah, God! I do not wish to judge or blame you any longer, I write this to you with a salutary motive, so that you cause me no further pain and because it soothes me that you should be aware of the pleasantries you have had at my expense. But I feel I shall soon be silent, for our relationship becomes threadbare, and who perceives this more than I? I write so that my letter shall be like myself. Adieu! Night, one o'clock. If you write such letters to me I shall write to you no more, so that all communication cease between us. For my impaired health will not allow it. I am suffering from a kind of fever of the nerves and now have to take baths, which I could not do in summer, owing to my domestic circumstances. To-day I took the first bath. It will not affect you, because you deceive yourself. Me you shall deceive no longer. How could you not feel ashamed of sending your letter with Wiesel's? I would have written a better one to a strange shop-keeper from Wittemberg, whom I had seen at some time or other; at least, one which would have revealed more sympathy. "If you are still thinking of coming here"! Fear nothing, but also hope for nothing. Your perfidious adroitness will succeed, and I shall not be able to come. But if I can, I will come. Indeed, you will never prevent my going anywhere. Do not hope for that and purely because of that I still wish to live. Do not excuse yourself at all! On many occasions you write nicely to me, give me good counsel, but it is always when you are well prepared, when you speak freely then comes such a letter as this one. When you see me in despair, you pity me. Do not venture to think this letter mean, I could give you an example of what I think is mean! But also, fear not. You shall have your wished-for leisure in Vienna. My Karl will not receive many such letters, so truly I loved him!

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

ii

Sunday, 19 Feb., 1800.

The present occurrences have been exhausting. I thought myself immune from exhaustion. I am not so. Recall the last incidents and days, what you said to me, what you told my mother, and how you related it to me. How it affected me, I should like to tell you, but you did not perceive it. My whole life still clung to one branch. Your last two letters have bent it in twain. One does not ask anyone to come to them like that—you do not ask me thus—one does not console like that—you do not comfort me thus! in the need that I was in. Your last letter through Better, in which you show yourself anxious concerning my health, made me write like this. I did not wish to write again. It is too horrible and too much like an enemy not to answer. Know then!

I now entirely yield to the world, to circumstances. Nothing further do I accept from you but what you give me in person, unless I lose my wits. That I will not, however. The years when you are gone, I will live with you in spirit unknown to you. Persuade me you can no longer. Be something, and I shall know you. You can find no joy with me. I overawe you and so I am able likewise to find no joy with you. There are three half-finished letters to you I have written, which would enable you to see how I have been forced to this decision slowly and painfully. Wherefore though? It is shown by them; the letters would terrify you and disturb your self-control. You will say, "You will nobly and affectionately suffer this injustice and loss, for you cannot do otherwise." I shall laugh at that, as you and I often laughed at others.

Do not be frightened by this letter. I feel like this and would do, even if I had not written it; and moreover, you yourself as the cause have composed it! and have not been dismayed, although it remains a fearful thing. I could not spare you this. Think of that. It was the last chord of a bad concert. If I have good to tell I will write. Fare thee well.

Rahel.

FIANCÉES

ELIZABETH BARRETT TO
ROBERT BROWNING

(The dots are the writer's, and do not indicate omissions from the text, except where, for the sake of this distinction, more than three dots are written, as at the end of the quotation from the following letter.

i

Nov. 18, 1845.

THE truth is . . . since we really are talking truths in this world . . . that I have doubted you—ah, you *know*—I felt from the beginning so sure of the nobility and integrity in you that I would have trusted you to make a path for my soul—*that*, you *know*. I felt certain that you believed of yourself every word you spoke or wrote—and you must not blame me if I thought besides sometimes (it was the extent of my thought) that you were self-deceived as to the nature of your own feelings. If you could turn over every page of my heart like the pages of a book, you would see nothing there offensive to the least of your feelings . . . not even to the outside fringes of your man's vanity . . . should you have any vanity like a man; which I *do* doubt. I never wronged you in the least of things—never . . . I thank God for it. But “self-deceived,” it was so easy for you to be; see how on every side and day by day, men are—and women too—in this sort of feelings. “Self-deceived,” it was so possible for you to be, and while I thought it possible, could I help thinking it *best* for you that it should be so—and was it not right in me to persist in thinking it possible? It was my reverence for you that made me persist! What was *I* that I should think otherwise? I had been shut up here too long face to face with my own spirit, not to know myself, and so, to have lost the common illusions of vanity. All the men I had ever known could not make your stature among them. So it was not distrust, but reverence rather. I sate by while the angel stirred the water, and I called it *Miracle*. Do not blame me now . . . *my* angel!

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

Nor say that I "do not lean" on you with all the weight of my "past" . . . because I do! You cannot guess what you are to me—you cannot—it is not possible: and though I have said *that* before, I must say it again . . . for it comes again to be said. It is something to me between dream and miracle, all of it—as if some dream of my earliest, brightest dreaming-time had been lying through these dark years to steep in the sunshine, returning to me in a double light. *Can* it be, I say to myself, that *you* feel for me *so*? Can it be meant for me? this from *you*?

ii

(She argues that her father's utter unreasonableness about the marriage of his daughters puts out of court Brown-ing's plan that he should try to appease Mr. Barrett's wrath by an explanatory letter. Her sister Henrietta, who became Mrs. Surtees Cook, was, like Elizabeth, excommunicated for marrying.)

"As to unfavourable influences," . . . I can speak of them quietly, having foreseen them from the first, . . . and it is true, I have been thinking since yesterday, that I might be prevented from receiving you here, and *should*, if all were known: but with that act, the adverse power would end. It is not my fault if I have to choose between two affections; only my pain; and I have not to choose between two duties, I feel, . . . since I am yours, while I am of any worth to you at all. For the plan of the sealed letter, it would correct no evil—ah, you do not see, you do not understand. The danger does not come from the side to which a reason may go. Only one person holds the thunder—and I shall be thundered at; I shall not be reasoned with—it is impossible. I could tell you some dreary chronicles made for laughing and crying over; and you know that if I once thought I might be loved enough to be spared above others, I cannot think so now. In the meantime we need not for the present be afraid. Let there be ever so many suspects, there will be no informers. I suspect the suspects, but the informers are out of the world, I am very sure:—and then

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the one person, by a curious anomaly, *never* draws an inference of this order until the bare blade of it is thrust palpably into his hand, point outwards. So it has been in other cases than ours—and so it is, at this moment in the house, with others than ourselves.

I have your letter to stop me. If I had my whole life in my hands with your letter, could I thank you for it, I wonder, at all worthily? I cannot believe that I could. Yet in life and in death I shall be grateful to you.

But for the paper—no. Now, observe, that it would seem like a prepared apology for something wrong. And besides—the apology would be nothing but the offence in another form—unless you said it was all a mistake—(*will* you, again?)—that it was all a mistake and you were only calling for your boots! Well, if you said *that*, it would be worth writing, but anything less would be something worse than nothing: and would not save me—which you were thinking of, I know—would not save me the least of the stripes. For “conditions”—now I will tell you what I said once in a jest . . .

“If a prince of Eldorado should come, with a pedigree of lineal descent from some signory in the moon in one hand, and a ticket of good-behaviour from the nearest Independent chapel, in the other—?”

“Why even *then*,” said my sister Arabel, “it would not *do*.” And she was right, and we all agreed that she was right. It is an obliquity of the will—and one laughs at it till the turn comes for crying. Poor Henrietta has suffered silently, with that softest of possible natures, which hers is indeed; beginning with implicit obedience, and ending with something as unlike it as possible: but, you see, where money is wanted, and where the dependance is total—see! And when once, in the case of the one* dearest to me; when just at the last he was involved in the same grief, and I attempted to make over my advantages to him (it could be no sacrifice, you know—I did not want the money, and could buy nothing with it so good as his

* Her favourite brother, Edward, who gave her the nickname *Ba* as a child, with which she signs her letters to Browning.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

happiness); when then my hands were seized and tied—and then and there, in the midst of the trouble, came the end of all! I tell you all this, just to make you understand a little. Did I not tell you before? But there is no danger at present—and why ruffle this present with disquieting thoughts? Why not leave that future to itself? For me, I sit in the track of the avalanche quite calmly . . . so calmly as to surprise myself at intervals—and yet I know the reason of the calmness well.

iii

(Post mark, Jan. 6, 1846.)

You never guessed, perhaps, what I look back to at this moment in the physiology of our intercourse, the curious double feeling I had about you—you personally, and you as the writer of these letters, and the crisis of the feeling, when I was positively vexed and jealous of myself for not succeeding better in making a unity of the two. I could not! And, moreover, I could not help but that the writer of the letters seemed nearer to me, long . . . long . . . and in spite of the postmark, than did the personal visitor who confounded me, and left me constantly under such an impression of its being all dream-work on his side, that I have stamped my feet on this floor with impatience to think of having to wait so many hours before the “candid” closing letter could come with its confessional of an illusion. “People say,” I used to think, “that women *always* know, and certainly I do not know, and therefore . . . therefore!—The logic crushed on like Juggernaut’s car. But in the letters it was different—the dear letters took me on the side of my own ideal life where I was able to stand a little upright and look round. I could read such letters for ever and answer them after a fashion . . . that, I felt from the beginning. But *you*—!

FIANCÉES

iv

(Her answer to Browning's suggestion at the end of January, 1846, that they shall get married by the end of the coming summer.)

Let it be this way, ever dearest. If in the time of fine weather I am not ill . . . *then* . . . *not now* . . . you shall decide, and your decision shall be duty and desire to me, both—I will make no difficulties. Remember, in the meanwhile, that I *have* decided to let it be as you shall choose . . . *shall* choose. That I love you enough to give you up “for your good,” is proof (to myself at least) that I love you enough for any other end: but you thought *too much of me in the last letter*. Do not mistake me. I believe and trust in all your words—only you are generous unawares, as other men are selfish.

v

(She recalls the anniversary of Browning's first visit to her at Wimpole Street.)

May 19, 1846.

. . . . And speaking the truth plainly, I, when I look back, dearest beloved, see that you have done everything for me, instead of my doing anything for you—that you have lifted me . . . Can I speak? Heavens!—how I had different thoughts of you and of myself and of the world and of life, last year at this hour! The spirits who look backward over the grace, cannot feel much otherwise from my feeling as I look back. As to *your* thanking *me*, *that* is monstrous, it seems to me. It is the action of your own heart alone, which has appeared to do you any good. For myself, if I do not spoil your life, it is the nearest to deserving thanks that I can come. Think what I was when you saw me first . . . laid there on the sofa as an object of the merest compassion! and of a sadder spirit than even the face showed! and then think of all your generosity and persistence in goodness. Think of it!—shall I ever cease? Not while the heart beats, which beats for you.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

And now as the year has rounded itself to "the perfect round," I will speak of that first letter, about which so many words were . . . just to say, this time, that I am glad now, yes, glad . . . as we were to have a miracle . . . to have it *so*, a born-miracle from the beginning. I feel glad, now, that nothing was *between* the knowing and the loving . . . and that the beloved eyes were never cold discerners and analyzers of me at any time. I am glad and grateful to you, my own altogether dearest! Yet the letter was read in pain and agitation, and you have scarcely guessed how much. I could not sleep night after night—could not—and my fear was at nights, lest the feverishness should make me talk deliriously and tell the secret aloud. Judge if the deeps of my heart were not shaken. From the first you had that power over me, notwithstanding those convictions which I also had, and which you know.

For it was not the character of the letter apart from you, which shook me—I could prove that to you—I received and answered very calmly, with most absolute calmness, a letter of the kind last summer . . . knowing in respect to the writer of it (just as I thought of *you*), that a moment's enthusiasm had carried him a good way past his discretion. I am sure that he was perfectly satisfied with my way of answering his letter . . . as I was myself. But *you* . . . *you* . . . I could not escape so from *you*. You were stronger than I, from the beginning, and I felt the mastery in you by the first word and first look.

Dearest and most generous. No man was ever like you, I know! May God keep me from laying a blot on one day of yours!—on one hour! and rather blot out mine!

For my life, it is yours, as this year has been yours. But how can it make you happy, such a thing as my life? *There*, I wonder still. It never made *me* happy, without you.

Your very own,

Ba.

FIANCÉES

vi

(The father, whose jealousy and severity had been the cause of the secrecy of Browning's courtship of the invalid Elizabeth, is here explained by his daughter, who had already agreed on marriage and the journey to Italy at the end of that summer.)

(July 16, 1846.)

Dearest, if *you* feel *that*, must not I feel it more deeply? Twice or three times lately he has said to me, "my love," and even "my puss," his old, old words before he was angry last year . . . and I quite quailed before them, as if they were so many knife-strokes. Anything but his *kindness* I can bear now.

Yet I am glad that you feel *that* . . . The difficulty (almost the despair!) has been with me, to make you understand the two ends of truth . . . both that he is *not* stone . . . and that he is immovable *as* stone. Perhaps only a very peculiar nature could have held so long the position he holds in his family. His hand would not lie so heavily without a pulse in it. Then he is upright—faithful to his conscience. You would respect him . . . and love him perhaps in the end. For me, he might have been king and father over me *to* the end, if he had thought it worth while to love me openly enough—yet, even *so*, he should not have let you come too near. And you could not (so) have come too near—for he would have had my confidence from the beginning, and no opportunity would have been permitted to you of proving your affection for me, and I should have thought always what I thought at first. So the nightshade and the eglantine are twisted, twined, one in the other. . . and the little pink roses lean up against the pale poison of the berries—we cannot tear this from that, let us think of it ever so much!

We must be humble and beseeching *afterwards* at least, and try to get forgiven. Poor Papa! I have turned it over in my mind, whether it would be less offensive, less *shocking* to him, if an application were made first. If I were strong, I think I should incline to it at all risks—but as it is . . . it

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

might . . . would, probably . . . take away the power of action from me altogether. We should be separated, you see, from *that moment* . . . hindered from writing . . . hindered from meeting . . . and I could evade nothing, as I am—not to say that I should have fainting fits at every lifting of his voice, through that inconvenient nervous temperament of mine which has so often made me ashamed of myself. Then . . . the positive disobedience might be a greater offence than the unauthorised act. I shut my eyes in terror sometimes. May God direct us to the best.

Oh—do not write about this, dearest, dearest? I throw myself out of it into the pure, sweet, deep thought of you . . . which is the love of you always. I am yours . . . your own. I never doubt of being yours. I feel too much yours. It is might and right together. You are more to me, beside, than the whole world.

vi

(Browning paid his ninetieth and last visit to Wimpole Street on September 11 and made their final plans for a quick marriage and then elopement to Italy. They were married on Saturday, September 12, at Marylebone Church—their ninety-first meeting. They agreed she must return home and rest a few days after so much excitement, before they set out on their travels. The flow of letters continues until the following Friday, when she writes a final letter. They were to catch a five o'clock train from Vauxhall to Southampton the next day. She and her maid, Wilson, were to meet Browning at a bookseller's near Wimpole Street earlier in the afternoon.)

Friday Night.

(Post-mark, September 19, 1846.)

At from half-past three to four, then—four will not, I suppose, be too late. I will not write more—I *cannot*. By to-morrow at this time I shall have *you* only, to love me—my beloved!

FIANCÉES

You *only*! As if one said, *God only*. And we shall have *Him* beside, I pray of Him.

I shall send to your address at New Cross your Hanmer's poems—and the two dear books you gave me, which I do not like to leave here and am afraid of hurting by taking them with me. Will you ask *our* Sister to put the parcel into a drawer, so as to keep it for us?

Your letters to me I take with me, let the "ounces" cry out aloud, ever so. I *tried* to leave them, and I could not. That is, they would not be left: it was not my fault—I will not be scolded.

Is this my last letter you, ever dearest? Oh—if I loved you less . . . a little, little less.

Why I should tell you that our marriage was invalid, or ought to be; and that you should by no means come for me to-morrow. It is dreadful . . . dreadful . . . to have to give pain here by a voluntary act—for the first time in my life.

Remind your mother and father of me affectionately and gratefully—and your Sister too! Would she think it too bold of me to say *our* Sister, if she had heard it on the last page?

Do you pray for me to-night, Robert! Pray for me, and love me, that I may have courage, feeling both—

Your own,

Ba.

The boxes are *safely sent*. Wilson has been perfect to me. And *I* . . . calling her "timid," and afraid of her timidity! I begin to think that none are so bold as the timid, when they are fairly roused.

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CAROLINE BOWLES TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

(There is rare beauty in the story of Caroline Bowles's devoted love. Southey was married, and she was his friend for twenty years. At last, in 1839, after his first wife was dead, when he married Caroline, he was sixty-one, and broken in health and mind. She was fifty-three. Their friendship started after she had submitted a poem to him. She seems to take a place among these fiancées by her love and its final meagre four years of married life.)

i

[1818]

I SHALL now keep those treasured letters while I live, with a clear conscience, and perhaps you may have created in my heart a feeling which before (as relating to myself) had no existence there—a degree of interest in something of me that shall survive on earth—I mean our correspondence. All my share in it will find indulgence for your sake.

ii

Buckland, June 3rd, 1818.

No, indeed, you have not guessed how I have thought and felt respecting the length of time which has elapsed since I had the boldness to address you. I was aware of the probability that it would be long before my packet reached you; and I felt assured that when you did receive it, you would honour me with a reply, and a gentle one. . . . I entirely agree with you, we need not create to ourselves fictitious griefs, life has too many real sorrows; but the mind recently afflicted colours everything with its own sadness. I wrote under such impressions, oppressed besides by the languor of a very trying nervous disorder. These circumstances may excuse me.

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Once, everything in life glowed with the brightness of my own feelings, but it was fit the painted vapour should be dispelled. Earth had too much of my affection, and when time has mellowed those shades of calamity, I may probably again regain some feelings of tempered enjoyment. Your letter has imparted to me the most pleasurable I have known for many a day. Such a heart as yours will not be insensible to the assurance. How much I indeed wish you were near enough for me to see and converse with you. Such a neighbourhood would give a new interest to my existence; but I live in a desert, of which, however, my little house is still the green valley.

If I indulge longer in such digression, I shall forget how little I am authorized to weary your patience; forgive me for having intruded on it so long, and believe me,

Yours most gratefully,

Caroline A. Bowles.

iii

Buckland, October 18, 1823.

The first feeling that with me and with most persons, I should think, succeeds the painful one of parting from a friend, is an impatient inclination to write to him, and if I had obeyed that impulse you would have heard from me from Ambleside. But sometimes (not always) sober afterthought restrains these foolish impulses of mine, and so you were deprived of the very interesting information that I was sitting all forlorn in a dull inn room, regretting Keswick with all my heart, and prevented by an incessant pouring rain from exploring, as I had hoped, some of the lovely scenery about Rydal and Grasmere. . . .

I have been amongst you to-day, enjoying with redoubled zest what I once thought nothing could increase my delight in, the introduction to your "Poets' Pilgrimage." How often I shall be in spirits in the midst of you, and revisiting with you some of those enchanting spots to which you were my conductor. To each and every member of your happy circle I send greetings warm and grateful;

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in particular, pray offer my best regards and thanks to Mrs. Southey. . . .

Pray convey a few more remembrances from me—to the Ladies of the Lakes, if they are still sojourning amongst you. Amongst a thousand things I should like to learn of you—alas! unteachable things—is the art of saying much in a few words; but I suppose a woman's ink is like her volubility—

“A stream that murmuring flows, and flows for ever.”

Hardly a drop of rain have I seen since I left Westmoreland. I had almost said “how provoking.” Selfish creature that I am—not dissatisfied, however—for I saw and enjoyed much, very much; and had I not done so, to have become acquainted with your family, and more thoroughly with yourself, would have made me ample amends; may I not say, to have acquired the privilege of calling you friend?

Most gratefully and truly yours,
God bless you dear friend, bless and preserve you.

Caroline A. Bowles.

iv

Buckland, August 29, 1824.

You are almost the only living creature in whom I have never found myself mistaken or disappointed, and you do not shun me because I am in sorrow, as is the world's way, and as I have bitterly experienced in times past from some who had sought and caressed me in my happier days.

Well, one friend of all weathers would compensate for the unkindness of fifty such worlds; and if I have found you late, it is not too late, for as you say, we shall meet “surely and lastingly hereafter.”

God grant we may here, and I do not despair of it, because, though hopeless of the physical regeneration you speak of, mine is not a disease that very quickly accomplishes its work. . . .

God bless you, dear friend, bless and preserve you.

Caroline A. Bowles.

FIANCÉES

P.S.—You wrote me on your birthday. I shall not forget that day if I live till its next anniversary. If I live till the 6th of next December, I shall then complete my thirty-seventh or thirty-eighth year—I am not certain which. . . . The next 6th of December will be doubly a wintry day to me, for it will be the first in my remembrance that will bring with it no tribute of affection. My dear *bonne*, according to the custom of her country, used always to buy me a nosegay on that morning; yes, flowers even on that wintry day, and I believe if we had dwelt on the Great St. Bernard, she would have contrived to find some among its eternal snows. No voice, no kiss, no flowers now. It will be all winter.

v

Buckland, November 13, 1824

Pray give me some token that you are on this side Heaven, dear friend! I am rather disquieted at your long silence; the more so, as when you wrote last, Cuthbert was only then recovering from a serious illness. Tell me you and all yours are well, and then I shall have no further uneasiness than the fear that you should think me a little importunate. But you must remember that I live out of myself and my solitary home, and so entirely in those I love and all that concerns them, that I am perhaps more excusable for taking alarm than those who are surrounded by friends and families; and all my social intercourse is epistolary. . . .

Farewell, and God bless you, dear friend,
Caroline A. Bowles.

vi

Buckland, November 15, 1827

Never since you called me "friend" has your mind been of such long duration, and I am growing too anxious to wait its voluntary termination. If I find only want of time and leisure have prevented you from writing, I shall be heartily ashamed of this importunity, and will promise to scold

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myself; but do not you be angry with me, for indeed I am anxious.

My last to you was a strange scrawl, but I had just been half-choked with salt water, and quite killed with fright, in my passage across from Southampton to Hythe. I was thinking all the way over, when the waves gave me breathing time, "now, if this were to fetch Mr. Southey from Southampton (you know I took you there) it would be worth encountering." . . .

God bless you, my dear friend. If you are too much engrossed to write to me, just say so in one line (no bull that!), and that you are well, and that will content me, for I am not very, very, very unreasonable.

Caroline A. Bowles.

vii

Buckland, October 21, 1833.

Dear friend, if anything could have made *me* dance for joy it would have been the sight of your handwriting, for I had been sorely troubled by your silence, though always endeavouring to reason myself into a belief of the true cause.

But you know it is said of women that we reason more with our hearts than our heads, and the former organ is a bad casuist, and I (at my best of times not among the wisest of women), have of late years fallen into the bad and sinful habit of expecting evil. It was not my early nature to do so, but painful experience has engrafted it on natural weakness.

This I must add, however, with vehement sincerity, that I would rather endure a week's anxiety than rob you of an hour's, nay half-an-hour's exercise; I do not say of five minutes; time enough *par parenthèse* to say "I am well," and fold up the missive.

Will you behave better for the future? I mean to yourself and Providence, which has so far, thank God for it, kept you in health and safety. . . . Yes, dear friend, but for memory and hope this would be a poor life truly. If you

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please, you shall introduce me to Sir Philip Sydney and his sister, "Pembroke's mother," as for Queen Elizabeth, to confess the truth, I should be as little ambitious of her acquaintance and patronage in another world (where the climate of her Court may be too warm for comfort) as I should have been of a place in her household here. . . .

God bless you, dear friend,

Caroline A. Bowles.

viii

Buckland, December 14, 1833.

Your letters, dear friend, do me more good than all my physicians, my other physicians, prescribe for me; they talk of hope, but your letters breathe hope, hope and encouragement even as to the things of this world, so connected with higher hopes and more blessed assurances, that while the effect of such mental communion with you lasts, I am almost all I ought to be—not cast down by temporal suffering and trusting in perfect peace on the promises that cannot fail.

We are approaching a new year, dear friend. . . . May it bring with it blessings to you and yours, blessings in God's own way of His good choosing! Neither you nor I, were the choice left to us, would dare make it for ourselves. Farewell for this year. It will be three years this Christmas since we last saw each other face to face, but I take delight in the assurance that our friendship is not of that nature which depends on, or even needs, the refreshing of personal intercourse; the enjoyment of it, however, would be such happiness that, to say the truth, I am most resigned to the deprivation when not permitting myself to dwell upon it.

Once more farewell, dear friend, and God bless you.

Caroline A. Bowles.

SECTION II

WIVES

Woman must not belong to herself.—*Schiller*.

The wife is a constellation of virtues ; she's the moon, and thou art the man in the moon.—*Congreve*.

Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses.—*Bacon*,

The happiest women, like the happiest nations, have no history.—*George Eliot*.

SECTION II—WIVES

AGNES PASTON TO WILLIAM PASTON

Referring to the betrothal of their son John to Margaret Mauteby. John and Margaret's second son, John Paston (the younger) married Margery Brews, who is represented also here and among "FIANCÉES."

(About 1440.)

To my Worshipful Husband, William Paston, be this Letter taken.

DEAR Husband, I recommend me to you, etc. Blessed be God, I send you good tidings of the coming, and the bringing home, of the Gentlewoman, that ye weeten of from Reedham, this same night, according to appointment, that ye made there for yourself.

And as for the first acquaintance between John Paston and the said Gentlewoman, she made him Gentle cheer in Gentle wise, and said, he was verily your son; and so I hope there shall need no great Treaty between them.

The Parson of Stockton told me, if ye would buy her a Gown her mother would give thereto a goodly Fur; the Gown needeth for to be had; and of colour it would be a goodly blew, or else a bright sanguine.

I pray you do buy for me two pipes of gold (thread). Your (fish) stews do well. The Holy Trinity have you in governance.

Written at Paston in haste the Wednesday next after "Deus qui errantibus";* for default of a good secretary, etc.

Yours,

Agnes Paston.

* First words of Collect for Third Sunday after Easter.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MARGARET PASTON TO JOHN PASTON

(This is "the said Gentlewoman" referred to in the preceding letter.)

(1443.)

To my right worshipful husband, John Paston, dwelling in the Inner Temple at London, in haste.

RIGHT worshipful husband, I recommend me to you, desiring heartily to hear of your welfare, thanking God of your amending of the great disease that ye have had, and I thank you for the letter that ye sent me, for by my troth, my mother and I were nought in heart's ease from the time that we wist of your sickness till we wist verily of your amending.

My Mother behested (promised) another Image of Wax of the weight of you, to our Lady of Walsingham, and she sent four Nobles (£1—6—8) to the four Orders of Friars at Norwich to pray for you; by my troth, I had never so heavy a season as I had from the time that I wist of your sickness, till I wist of your amending, and yet my heart is in no great ease, nor nought shall be, 'till I weet that ye be very whole. Your Father and mine was this day sev'-night at Beccles, for a matter of the Prior of Bromholm, and lay at Gelderstone* that night, and was there till it was 9 of the clock, and the other day. And I sent thither for a gown, and my mother said that I should none have then, till I had been there anon, and so they could none get.

My (step) Father Garneys sent me word that he should have been here the next week, and mine Emme (uncle) also, and play them here with their Hawks, and they should have me home with them; and so God help me, I shall excuse me of my going thither if I may, for I suppose that I shall readilier have tidings from you here than I should have there. I shall send my Mother a Token that she took (brought) me, for I suppose the time is come that I should send it her, if I keep the behest that I have made; I suppose I have told you what it was; I pray you heartily that (ye)

* Ralph Garneys, whom Margaret's widowed mother had married, lived here.

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will vouchsafe to send me a Letter, as hastily as ye may, if writing be none disease to you, and that ye will vouchsafe to send me word how your sore do. If I might have had my will, I should have seen you ere this time; I would ye were at home, if it were your ease, and your sore might be as well looked to here as it is there to be, now lever than a new Gown though it were of Scarlet. I pray you if your sore be whole, and so that ye may endure to ride, when my father come to London, that ye will ask leave and come home when the horse should be sent home again, for I hope ye shall be kept as tenderly here as ye be at London. I may none leisure have to do write half a quarter so much as I should say to you if I might speak with you. I shall send you another Letter as hastily as I may. I thank you that ye would vouchsafe to remember my girdle, and that ye would write to me at the time, for I suppose that writing was none ease to you. Almighty God have you in his keeping, and send you health. Written at Oxnead, in right great haste, on St. Michael's Even.

Yours,

Margaret Paston.

Oxnead,

Saturday, 28th September, 1443, 22 H. vl.

My Mother greet you well, and sendeth you God's blessing and hers; and she prayeth you, and I pray you also, that ye be well dieted of meat and drink, for that is the greatest help that ye may have now to your healthward. Your Son fareth well, blessed be God!

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MARGERY PASTON TO JOHN PASTON (THE YOUNGER)

The writer appears among the "Fiancées" as Margery Brews.

i

(Dec. 1477.)

To my right reverend and worshipful Husband, John Paston.

RIGHT reverend and worshipful Husband, I recommend me to you, desiring heartily to hear of your welfare, thanking you for the Token that ye sent me by Edmund Perys, praying you to weet that my Mother sent to my father to London for a Gown cloth of Muster develers to make of a Gown for me; and he told my Mother and me when he came home, that he charged you to buy it, after that he was come out of London.

I pray you, if it be not bought, that you will vouchsafe to buy it, and send it home as soon as ye may, for I have no gown to wear this winter but my black and my green-a-lyer, and that is so cumberous that I am weary to wear it.

. . . . Of all other things that ye desired that I should send you word of, I have sent you word of in a letter that I did write on Our Lady's day last was (Dec. 8); the Holy Trinity have you in his keeping.

Written at Oxnead in right great haste on the Thursday next before Saint Thomas's day (Dec. 21 or 29).

I pray you that ye will wear the Ring with the Image of St. Margaret that I sent you, for a Remembrance, till ye come home. . . .

Yours,
Margery Paston.

ii

Further news of the quarrel with their neighbours, including their uncle, William Paston.

(Nov. 1482.)

Mine own sweet heart, in my most humble wise, I recommend me unto you, desiring heartily to hear of your

WIVES

welfare, the which I beseech Almighty God preserve and keep to His pleasure and your heart's desire.

Sir, the cause of my writing to you at this time, on Friday at night last past came Alexander Wharton, John Howse, and John Fille, with two good carts well manned and horsed with them to Marlingford, and there at the manor of Marlingford and at the mill loaded both carts with mestlyon and wheat, and betimes on Saturday in the morning they departed from Marlingford towards Bungay, as it is said; for the said carts came from Bungay, as I suppose, by the sending of Bryon, for he goeth hastily over the sea, as it is said, and as I suppose he will have the mestlyon over with him, for the most part of the cart loads was mestlyon, etc. . . .

iii

(Mourning at Christmas.)

(1484.)

To my right worshipful husband, John Paston.

Right worshipful husband, I recommend me unto you; Please it you to weet, that I sent your eldest Son to my Lady Morley, to have knowledge what Sports were used in her house in Christmas next following, after the decease of my Lord her husband; and she said that there were none Disguisings, nor Harping, nor Luting, nor Singing, nor none loud Disports; but playing at the Tables (Backgammon), and Chess, and Cards; such disports she gave her Folks leave to play and none other.

Your Son did his errand right well as ye shall hear after this. I sent your younger Son to the Lady Stapleton, and she said according to my Lady Morley's saying in that; and as she had seen used in places of worship thereas she hath been.

I pray you that ye will assure to you some man at Caister, to keep your Buttery, for the man that ye left with me, will not take upon him to breve (keep accounts) daily as ye commanded; he saith, he hath not used to give a reckoning neither of Bread nor Ale, till at the week's end, and he saith, he wot well that he should not content it and there-

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

fore I suppose he shall not abide, and I trow ye shall be fain to purvey another man for Symond, for ye are never the nearer a wise man for him.

I am sorry that ye shall not at home be for Christmas.

I pray you that ye will come as soon as ye may; I shall think myself half a Widow, because ye shall not be at home, etc. God have you in his keeping. Written on Christmas Even.

By your Margery Paston

iv

This was written while John Paston was Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk 1485-6.

To my Master John Paston be this delivered.

Right reverend and worshipful Sir, in my most humble wise I recommend me to you, desiring to hear of your welfare, the which I beseech God to preserve to his pleasure, and to your heart's desire.

Sir, I thank you for the venison that ye sent me; and your ship is sailed out of the haven this day.

Sir, I send you by my brother William your stomacher of damask. As for your tippet of velvet it is not here; Ann saith that ye put in your casket at London.

Sir, your children be in good health, blessed be God.

Sir, I pray you send me the gold, that I spake to you of, by the next man that cometh to Norwich.

Sir, your mast that lay at Yarmouth is let to a ship of Hull for 13s. 4d., and if there fall any hurt thereto, ye shall have a new mast therefore.

No more to you at this time, but Almighty God have you in his keeping. Written at Caister Hall the 21st day of January, in the first year of King Harry the VIIth (1486).

I pray God no ladies no more overcome you, that ye give no longer respite in your matters.

By your Servant,
Margery Paston.

WIVES

ANNE BOLEYN TO HENRY VIII

Anne was beheaded on a charge of high treason three years after her marriage to the King. The following letter from the doomed young wife includes, in Addison's words, "the expostulations of a slighted lover, the resentments of an injured woman, and the sorrows of an imprisoned queen." And, one might add, of a mother. It was first printed in 1649 in Lord Herbert's "Life and Reign of Henry VIII," and doubts have been expressed as to its authenticity. It is interesting enough to include here, even as a possible forgery of the early seventeenth century.

(1536.)

SIR,—Your Grace's displeasure, and my imprisonment, are things so strange unto me, as what to write, or what to excuse, I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send unto me (willing me to confess a truth, and so obtain your favour) by such an one, whom you know to be mine ancient professed enemy, I no sooner received this message by him, than I rightly conceived your meaning; and if, as you say, confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty perform your command.

But let not your Grace ever imagine that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault, where not so much as a thought thereof preceded. And to speak a truth, never Prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn; with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your Grace's pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation or received Queenship, but that I always looked for such an alteration as I now find; for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your Grace's fancy, the least alteration, I knew, was fit and sufficient to draw that fancy to some other object. You have chosen me, from a low estate, to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire. If then, you find

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

me worthy of such honour, good your Grace, let not any light fancy, or bad counsel of mine enemies, withdraw your princely favour from me; neither let that stain, that unworthy stain, of a disloyal heart towards your good Grace, ever cast so foul a blot on your most dutiful wife, and the Infant-Princess your daughter. Try me, good King, but let me have a lawful trial, and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and judges; yea, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open shame. Then shall you see either mine innocence cleared, your suspicion and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. . . .

But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander must bring you the enjoying of your desired happiness; then I desire of God, that He will pardon your great sin therein, and likewise mine enemies, the instruments thereof, and that He will not call you to a strict account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at his general judgment-seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear, and in whose judgment I doubt not (whatsoever the world may think of me) mine innocence shall be openly and sufficiently cleared.

My last and only request shall be that myself may only bear the burden of your Grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen who (as I understand) are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request, and I will so leave to trouble your Grace any further, with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity to have your Grace in His good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions. From my doleful prison in the Tower, this sixth of May.

Your most loyal and ever faithful wife,
Anne Boleyn.

WIVES

LADY MORE TO MR. SECRETARY CROMWELL

Sir Thomas More was in the Tower. He was beheaded the following year as a consequence of refusing to countenance the King's marriage to Ann Boleyn.

(1534.)

RIGHT Honorable, and my especial good Master Secretary,—In my most humble wise I recommend me unto your good Mastership, knowing myself to be most deeply bounden to your good mastership, for your manyfold goodness, and loving favour, both before this time, and yet daily, now also showed towards my poor husband and me. I pray Almighty God continue your goodness so still, for thereupon hangeth the greatest part of my poor husband's comfort and mine. The cause of my writing, at this time, is to certify your especial good mastership of my great and extreme necessity; which on and besides the charge of mine own house, do pay 15 shillings weekly for the board-wages of my poor husband, and his servant; for the maintaining whereof I have been compelled, of very necessity, to sell part of mine apparel, for lack of other substance to make money of. Wherefore my most humble petition and suit to your mastership at this time, is to desire your mastership's favourable advice and counsel whether I may be so bold to attend upon the King's most gracious Highness. I trust there is no doubt* in the cause of my impediment; for the young man, being a ploughman, had been diseased with the ague by the space of three years before that he departed. And besides this, it is now five weeks sith he departed, and no other person diseased in the house sith that time: wherefore I most humbly beseech your especial good mastership (as my only trust is, and else know not what to do, but utterly in this world to be undone) for the love of God to consider the premisses; and thereupon of your most favourable help to the comforting of my poor husband and me, in this our great heaviness, extreme age, and necessity. And thus we, and all ours, shall daily, during

* Probably fear of the plague is meant.

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our lives, pray to God for the prosperous success of your
right honourable dignity.

By your poor continual oratrix,
Dame Alis More.

To the Right Honorable, and her especial good Master,
Master Secretary.

WIVES

MRS. PENRUDDOCK TO HER HUSBAND

Penruddock was beheaded at Exeter in 1655 by Cromwell's orders, for his share in a rising there. The following letter was written to him the night before the execution. It is a sadly typical product of the brutal and brilliant sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

May 3, 1655.

MY Dear Heart,—My sad parting was so far from making me forget you, that I scarce thought upon myself since, but wholly upon you. Those dear embraces which I yet feel, and shall never lose, being the faithful testimonies of an indulgent husband, have charmed my soul to such a reverence of your remembrance, that were it possible, I would, with my own blood, cement your dead limbs to live again, and (with reverence) think it no sin to rob Heaven a little longer of a martyr. Oh! my dear, you must now pardon my passion, this being my last (oh, fatal word!) that ever you will receive from me; and know, that until the last minute that I can imagine you shall live, I shall sacrifice the prayers of a Christian, and the groans of an afflicted wife. And when you are not (which sure by sympathy I shall know), I shall wish my own dissolution with you, that so we may go hand in hand to Heaven. 'Tis too late to tell you what I have, or rather have not done for you; how being turned out of doors because I came to beg mercy; the Lord lay not your blood to their charge.

I would fain discourse longer with you, but dare not; passion begins to drown my reason, and will rob me of my devoirs, which is all I have left to serve you. Adieu, therefore, ten thousand times, my dearest dear; and since I must never see you more, take this prayer,—May your faith be so strengthened that your constancy may continue;

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

and then I know Heaven will receive you; whither grief
and love will in a short time (I hope) translate,

My dear,

Your sad, but constant wife, even to love your ashes when
dead,

Arundel Penruddock.

May the 3rd, 1655, eleven o'clock at night. Your
children beg your blessing, and present their duties to you.

WIVES

LADY RACHEL RUSSELL TO LORD RUSSELL

William Lord Russell, who married Lady Rachel Wriothesley, in 1669, was beheaded in 1683 for alleged complicity in the Rye House Plot. The letters of Lady Rachel, who was a daughter of the Earl of Southampton, are famous for their championship of her husband's character.

i

Tunbridge Wells, 1678.

AFTER a toilsome day, there is some refreshment to be telling our story to our best friends. I have seen your girl well laid in bed, and ourselves have made our suppers upon biscuits, a bottle of white wine, and another of beer, mingled my uncle's whey with nutmeg and sugar. None are disposing to bed . . . our want is, yourself and good weather. . . I have not much more to say this night; I hope the quilt is remembered and Frances must remember to send more biscuits either when you come, or soon after. I long to hear from you, my dearest soul, and truly think your absence already an age. I have no mind to my gold plate: here is no table to set it on; but if that does not come I desire you would bid Betty Foster send the silver glass I use every day. In discretion I haste to bed, longing for Monday, I assure you.

From your
R. Russell.

ii

(About the children.)

Stratton,

September 20th, 1681.

. . . . They will tell you how well I got hither and how well I found our dear treasure (their son) here; your boy will please you; you will, I think, find him improved, though I tell you so beforehand. They fancy he wanted you; for, as soon as I alighted, he followed, calling Papa;

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but I suppose it is the word he has most command of, so was not disobliged by the little fellow. The girls were fine in remembrance of the happy 29th of September; and we drank your health, after a reindeer pie; and at night your girls and I supped on a sack posset: nay, Master (their son) would have his room, and for haste burnt his fingers in the posset; but he does but rub his hands for it. It is the most glorious weather here that ever was seen. The coach shall meet you at the cabbage garden: be there by eight o'clock or a little after; though I guess you can hardly be there so soon, day breaks so late; and indeed the mornings are so misty, it is not wholesome to be in the air so early. I do propose going to my neighbour Worsley to-day. I would fain be telling my heart more things—anything to be in a kind of talk with him; but, I believe, Spencer stays for my despatch: he was willing to go early; but this was to be the delight of the morning, and the support of the day. It is performed in bed, thy pillow at my back, where thy dear head shall lie, I hope, to-morrow night, and many more. I trust in His mercy, notwithstanding all our enemies or ill-wishers. Love, and be willing to be loved by,

R. Russell.

WIVES

THE SAME TO KING CHARLES THE SECOND

Written after the trial in which Lord Russell was judged guilty of high treason, and at which Lady Russell acted as her husband's secretary. This letter was endorsed by her: "My letter to the King a few days after my dear Lord's death."

May it please your Majesty,

I find my husband's enemies are not appeased with his blood, and still continue to misrepresent him to your Majesty. It is a great addition to my sorrows to hear your Majesty is prevailed upon to believe that the paper he delivered to the sheriff at his death was not his own. I can truly say, and am ready in the solemnest manner to attest, that (during his imprisonment) I often heard him discourse of the chiefest matters contained in that paper, in the same expressions he therein uses, as some of those few relations that were admitted to him can likewise aver. And sure it is an argument of no great force that there is a phrase or two in it another uses, when nothing is more common than to take up such words we like, or are accustomed to in our conversation. I beg leave further to avow to your Majesty that all that is set down in the paper* read to your Majesty on Sunday night, is exactly true; as I doubt not but the rest of the paper is, which was written at my request, and the author of it in all his conversation with my husband, that I was privy to, showed himself a loyal subject to your Majesty, a faithful friend to him, and a most tender and conscientious minister to his soul. I do therefore humbly beg your Majesty would be so charitable to believe, that he who in all his life was observed to act with the greatest clearness and sincerity, would not at the point of death do so disingenuous and false a thing as to deliver for his own what was not properly and expressly so. And if

*The paper contains an account of all that passed between Dr. Burnet and Lord Russell, concerning his last speech and epistle. It is called the "Journal" in the "History of his own Times" (Vol. I). The words in parenthesis, like "during his imprisonment" were written and crossed out.

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after the loss, in such a manner, of the best husband in the world, I were capable of any consolation, your Majesty only could afford it by having better thought of him; which when I was so importunate to speak with your Majesty, I thought I had some reason to believe I should have inclined you to, not from the credit of my word, but upon the evidence of what I had to say. I hope I have written nothing in this that will displease your Majesty; if I have, I humbly beg of you to consider it as coming from a woman amazed with grief; and that you will pardon the daughter of a person who served your Majesty's father in his greatest extremities (and your Majesty in your greatest posts), and one that is not conscious of having ever done anything to offend you (before). I shall ever pray for your Majesty's long life and happy reign; who am with all humility, may it please your Majesty, etc.

WIVES

LADY BYRON TO LORD BYRON

A vast literature has grown up around the debatable questions connected with Byron's separation from his wife in 1816, after less than a year of married life. Her letters only add to the conflict of evidence as to the cause of it.

Kirkby, Feb. 13, 1816.

ON reconsidering your last letter to me, and your second to my father, I find some allusions which I will not leave to be answered by others because the explanation may be less disagreeable to you from myself.

My letters of January 15th and 16th. It can be fully and clearly proved that I left your house under the persuasion of your having a complaint of so dangerous a nature that any agitation might bring on a fatal crisis. My entreaties before I quitted you that you would take medical advice, repeated in my letter of January 15th, must convince you of such an impression on my mind. My absence, if it had not been rendered necessary by other causes, was medically recommended on that ground, as removing an object of irritation. I should have acted inconsistently with my unchanged affection for you, or indeed with the common principles of humanity, by urging my wrongs at that moment. From subsequent accounts I found that these particular apprehensions which I, and others, had entertained, were groundless. Till they were ascertained to be so, it was my intention to induce you to come to this place where, at every hazard, I would have devoted myself to the alleviation of *your* sufferings, and should not then have reminded you of *my own*, as believing you, from physical causes, not to be *accountable* for them. My parents, under the same impression communicated to me, felt the kindest anxiety to promote my wishes and your recovery, by receiving you here. Of all this my letter of January 16th is a testimony. If for these reasons (to which others were perhaps added) I did not remonstrate at the time of leaving your house, you cannot forget that I had before warned you, earnestly and affectionately, of the unhappy and

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irreparable consequences which must ensure from your conduct, both to yourself and to me, that to those representations you had replied by a determination to be wicked, though it should break my heart.

What then had I to expect? I cannot attribute your "state of mind" to any cause so much as the *total* dereliction of principle, which, since our marriage, you have professed and gloried in. Your acknowledgments have not been accompanied by any intentions of amendment.

I have consistently fulfilled my duty as your wife. It was too dear to be resigned till it became hopeless. Now my resolution cannot be changed.

A. I. Byron.

WIVES

SARA COLERIDGE TO HENRY N. COLERIDGE

Concerning the baby. Sara was daughter of the famous poet, and became a popular writer of children's verse, besides tales, translations and essays. She edited her father's works. Henry Nelson Coleridge, whom she married, was her cousin.

Nab Cottage, Grasmere (1833).

. . . . You say you cannot bring before your mind's eye our little Herby. A mother is qualified to draw a child's portrait, if close study of the original be a qualification. High colouring may be allowed for. I will try to give you some notion of our child. He is too even a mixture of both father and mother to be strikingly like either; and this is the more natural, as Henry and I have features less definite than our expressions. This may, perhaps, account for the flowing softness and more than childlike indefiniteness of outline which our boy's face presents; it is all colour and expression—such varying expression as consists with the sort of corporeal moulding which I have described in which the vehicle is lost sight of, and the material of the veil is obscured by the brightness of what shines through it—not that pointed sort of fixed expression which seems more mechanically formed by strong lines and angular features. To be more particular, he has round eyes, and a round nose, and round lips and cheeks; and he has deep blue eyes, which vary from stone-grey to skiey azure, according to influences of light and shade; and yellowish light-brown hair, and cheeks and lips rosy up to the very deepest, brightest tint of childish rosyhood. He will not be a handsome man, but he is a pretty representative of three years old, as D—— was a “representative baby”; and folks who put the glossy side of their opinions outermost for the gratified eyes of mothers and nurses, and all that large class with whom rosy cheeks are beginning, middle, and end of beauty say enough to make me—as vain as I am. I don't

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pretend to any exemption from the general lot of parental delusion: I mean that, like most other parents, I see my child through an atmosphere which illuminates, magnifies, and at the same time refines the object to a degree that amounts to a delusion, at least, unless we are aware that to other eyes it appears by the light of common day only. My father says that those who love intensely see more clearly than indifferent persons; they see minutenesses which escape other eyes; they see "the very pulse of the machine." Doubtless; but then, don't they magnify them by looking through the medium of their own partiality? Don't they raise into undue relative importance by exclusive gazing; don't wishes and hopes, indulged and cherished long, turn into realities, as the rapt astronomer gazed upon the stars, and mused on human knowledge, and longed for magic power, till he believed that he directed the sun's course and the sweet influences of the Pleiades?

To return to our son and heir; he is an impetuous, vivacious child, and the softer moments of such are particularly touching (so thinks the mother of a vehement urchin). I lately asked him the meaning of a word; he turned his rosy face to the window, and cast up the full blue eyes, which looked liquid in the light, in the short hush of childish contemplation. The innocent thoughtfulness, contrasted with his usual noisy mirth and rapidity, struck my fancy. I had never before seen him condescend to make an effort at recollection. The word usually passed from his lips like an arrow from a bow; and if not forthcoming instantly there was an absolute unconcern as to its fate in the region of memory. The necessity of brain-racking is not among the number of his discoveries in the (to him) new world. All wears the freshness and the glory of a dream; and the stale, flat, and unprofitable, and the *improbis labor*, and the sadness and despondency, are all behind that visionary haze which hides the dull reality, the mournful future of man's life. You may well suppose that I look on our darling boy with many fears; but "fortitude and patient cheer" must recall me from such "industrious folly," and

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faith and piety must tell me that this is not to be his home for ever, and that the glories of this world are lent but to spiritualise us to incite us to look upward; and that the trials which I dread for my darling are but part of his Maker's general scheme of goodness and wisdom.

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MARY SHELLEY TO P. B. SHELLEY

"The little Commodore" is Alba, afterwards called Allegra, the baby girl of Lord Byron and Clare Clairmont, who was Mary's half-sister (see Section III, "Lovers"). Byron would have nothing to do with the child's mother, but afterwards took charge of the child, until her death from fever in an Italian convent. Mary is writing from Marlow, where the Shelleys had acquired a house. Shelley was trying to get his affairs straight, so that they could go to Italy. Fanny Godwin, who had killed herself, was Mary's half-sister.

i

28th September, 1817.

. . . . I am just now surrounded by babes. Alba is scratching and crowing, William is amusing himself with wrapping a shawl round him, and Miss Clara staring at the fire. . . . Adieu, dearest love. I want to say again, that you may fully answer me, how very, *very* anxious I am to know the whole extent of your present difficulties and pursuits; and remember also that if this *post obit* is to be a long business, Alba must go before it is finished. Willy is just going to bed. When I ask him where you are, he makes me a long speech that I do not understand. But I know my own one, that you are away, and I wish that you were with me. Come soon, my own only love.

Your affectionate girl,

M. W. S.

ii

5th October, 1817.

. . . . How happy I shall be, my own dearest love, to see you again. Your last was so very, very short a visit; and after you were gone I thought of so many things I had to say to you, and had no time to say. Come Tuesday, dearest, and let us enjoy some of each other's company; come and see your sweet babes and the little Commodore;

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she is lively and an uncommonly interesting child. I never see her without thinking of the expressions in my mother's letters concerning Fanny. If a mother's eyes were not partial, she seemed like this Alba. She mentions her intelligent eyes and great vivacity; but this is a melancholy subject.

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MARY SHELLEY TO MISS CURRAN

Miss Curran was responsible for the famous portrait of Shelley. After his death Mary Shelley wrote and begged Miss Curran to give it her. The following letter was written three weeks after the death of William, their baby boy. William's tomb was near Keat's.

Leghorn, 27th June, 1819.

. . . . I am going to write another stupid letter to you yet what can I do? I no sooner take up my pen than my thoughts run away with me, and I cannot guide it except about *one* subject, and that I must avoid. So I entreat you to join this to your many other kindnesses, and to excuse me. I have received the two letters forwarded from Rome. . . . Pray let us hear from you, for both Shelley and I are anxious—more than I can express—to know how you are. Let us hear also, if you please, anything you may have done about the tomb, near which I shall lie one day, and care not, for my own sake, how soon. I never shall recover that blow; I feel it more than at Rome; the thought never leaves me for a single moment; everything on earth has lost its interest to me. You see I told you that I could only write to you on one subject; how can I, since, do all I can (and I endeavour very sincerely), I can think of no other, so I will leave off. Shelley is tolerably well, and desires his kindest remembrances.

Most affectionately yours,
Mary W. Shelley.

WIVES

MARY SHELLEY TO MRS. GISBORNE

About her husband, drowned two months before.

Pisa, September 10, 1822.

AND so here I am! I continue to exist; to see one day succeed the other; to dread night, but more to dread morning, and hail another cheerless day. My boy, too, alas! no consolation. When I think how he loved him—the plans he had for his education—his sweet and childish voice strikes me to the heart. Why should we live in this world of pain and anguish. And if he went I should go too, and we should all sleep in peace.

At times I feel an energy within me to combat with my destiny, but again I sink. I have but one hope, for which I live—to render myself worthy to join him; and such a feeling sustains me during moments of enthusiasm; but darkness and misery soon overwhelm the mind, when all near objects bring agony alone with them. People used to call me lucky in my star: you see now how true such a prophecy is!

I was fortunate in having fearlessly placed my destiny in the hands of one who—a superior being among men, a bright planetary spirit enshrined in an earthly temple—raised me to the height of happiness. So far I am now happy, that I would not change my situation as *his* widow with that of the most prosperous woman in the world; and surely the time will at length come when I shall be at peace, and my brain and heart be no longer alive with unutterable anguish. I can conceive but of one circumstance that could afford me the semblance of content—that is, the being permitted to live where I am now, in the same house, in the same state, occupied alone with my child, in collecting his manuscripts, writing his life, and thus to go easily to my grave.

But this must not be! Even if circumstances did not compel me to return to England, I would not stay another summer in Italy with my child. I will at least do my best to render him well and happy; and the idea that my

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circumstances may at all injure him is the fiercest pang my mind endures.

I wrote you a long letter, containing a slight sketch of my sufferings. I sent it, directed to Peacock, at the India House, because accident led me to believe that you were no longer in London. I said in that, that on that day (August 15) they had gone to perform the last offices for him; however, I erred in this, for on that day those of Edward were alone fulfilled, and they returned on the 16th to celebrate Shelley's. I will say nothing of the ceremony, since Trelawny has written an account of it, to be printed in the forthcoming journal. I will only say, that all except his heart (which was inconsumable) was burnt, and that days ago I went to Leghorn and beheld the small box that contained his earthly dress. Those smiles—that form—Great God! No—he is not there; he is with me, about me—life of my life, and soul of my soul! If his divine spirit did not penetrate mine, I could not survive to weep thus.

I will mention the friends I have here, that you may form an idea of our situation. Mrs. Williams and I live together. We have one purse, and, joined in misery, we are for the present joined in life.

The poor girl withers like a lily. She lives for her children; but it is a living death. Lord Byron has been very kind. But the friend to whom we are eternally indebted is Trelawny. I have, of course, mentioned him to you as one who wishes to be considered eccentric, but who was noble and generous at bottom. I always thought so even when no fact proved it; and Shelley agreed with me, as he always did—or rather, I with him. We heard people speak against him on account of his vagaries: we said to one another, "Still we like him; we believe him to be good." Once, even, when a whim of his led him to treat me with something like impertinence, I forgave him, and I have now been well rewarded. In my outline of events, you will see how, unasked, he returned with Jane and me from Leghorn to Lerici; how he stayed with us miserable creatures twelve days there, endeavouring to keep up our spirits; how he

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left us on Thursday, and, finding our misfortune confirmed, then without rest, returned on Friday to us, and again without rest, returned with us to Pisa on Saturday. These were no common services. Since that, he has gone through by himself all the annoyances of dancing attendance on consuls and governors; for permission to fulfil the last duties to those gone, and attending the ceremony himself. All the disagreeable part, and all the fatigue fell on him. As Hunt said, "He worked with the meanest and felt with the best." He is generous to a distressing degree; but after all these benefits what I most thank him for is this: When, on that night of agony—that Friday night—he returned, to announce that hope was dead for us; when he told me that, his earthly frame being found, his spirit was no longer to be my guide, protector, and companion in this dark world—he did not attempt to console me; that would have been too cruelly useless; but he launched forth into, as it were, an overflowing and eloquent praise of my divine Shelley, till I was almost happy that I was thus unhappy, to be fed by the praise of him, and to dwell on the eulogy that his loss thus drew from his friend.

God knows what will become of me! My life is now very monotonous as to outward events; yet how diversified by internal feeling! How often, in the intensity of grief, does one instant seem to fill and embrace the universe! As to the rest—the mechanical spending of my time—of course I have a great deal to do preparing for my journey. I make no visits except one, once in about ten days, to Mrs. Mason. Trelawny resides chiefly at Leghorn, since he is captain of Lord Byron's vessel, the *Bolivar*. He comes to see us about once a week, and Lord Byron visits us about twice a week, accompanied by the Guiccioli; but seeing people is an annoyance which I am happy to be spared. Solitude is my only help and resource. Accustomed, even when he was with me, to spend much of my time alone, I can at those moments forget myself, until some idea, which I think I would communicate to him, occurs, and then the yawning and dark gulf again displays itself, unshaded by the rainbows which the imagination had formed. Despair

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energy, love, desponding and excessive affliction, are like clouds driven across my mind, one by one, until tears blot the scene, and weariness of spirit consigns me to temporary repose.

I shudder with horror when I look back upon what I have suffered; and when I think of the wild and miserable thoughts that have possessed me, I say to myself, "Is it true that I ever felt thus?" and then I weep in pity for myself; yet each day adds to the stock of sorrow; and death is the only end. I would study, and I hope I shall. I would write, and, when I am settled I may. But were it not for the steady hope I entertain of joining him, what a mockery would be this world! Without that hope, I could not study or write; for fame and usefulness (except so far as regards my child) are nullities to me. Yet I shall be happy if anything I ever produce may exalt and soften sorrow, as the writings of the divinities of our race have mine. But how can I aspire to that?

The world will surely one day feel what it has lost, when this bright child of song deserted her. Is not *Adonais* his own elegy? And there does he truly depict the universal woe which should overspread all good minds, since he has ceased to be their fellow-labourer in this wordly scene. How lovely does he paint death to be, and with what heartfelt sorrow does one repeat that line:

"But I am chain'd to time, and cannot thence depart!"

How long do you think I shall live? As long as my mother? Then eleven long years must intervene. I am now on the eve of completing my five-and-twentieth year. How drearily young for one so lost as I! How young in years for one who lives ages each day in sorrow! Think you that those moments are counted in my life as in other people's? Ah, no! The day before the sea closed over mine own Shelley, he said to Marianne, "If I die to-morrow I have lived to be older than my father. I am ninety years of age." Thus also may I say. The eight years I passed with him were spun out beyond the usual length of a man's life; and what I have suffered since will write years on my brow, and entrench them in my heart. Surely I am not long for

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this world. Most sure would I be were it not for my boy; but God grant that I may live to make his early years happy! Well, adieu! I have no events to write about, and can therefore only scrawl about my feelings. This letter, indeed, is only the sequel of my last. In that I closed the history of all that can interest me. That letter I wish you to send my father; the present it is best not.

I suppose I shall see you in England some of these days; but I shall write to you again before I quit this place. Be as happy as you can, and hope for better things in the next world. By firm hope you may attain your wishes. Again adieu!

Affectionately yours,
M. W. Shelley.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

JANE WILLIAMS TO MARY SHELLEY

Her "husband" had been drowned with Shelley two months earlier, and the two widowed friends had been occupied in making arrangements for their future. Jane, who had not been legally married to Shelley's friend Williams, cast in her lot with Hogg, Shelley's biographer.

Geneva, September, 1822.

I ONLY arrived this day, my dearest Mary, and find your letter, the only friend who welcomes me. I will not detail all the misery I have suffered, let it be added to the heap that must be piled up; and when the measure is brimful, it needs must overflow; and then, peace! What have been my feelings to-day? I have gazed on that lake, still and ever the same, rolling on in its course, as if this gap in creation had never been made. I have passed that place where our little boat used to land, but where is the hand stretched out to meet mine, where the glad voice, the sweet smile, the beloved form? Oh! Mary, is my heart human that I endure scenes like this and live? My arrival at the inn here has been one of the most painful trials I have yet undergone. The landlady, who came to the door, did not recognize me immediately, and when she did, our mutual tears prevented both interrogation and answer for some minutes. I then bore my sorrowful burden up these stairs he had formerly passed in all the pride of youth, hope, and love. When will these heartrending scenes be finished? Never! for, when they cease, memory will furnish others. . . . God bless you, dearest girl; take care of yourself. Remember me to the Hunts.

Ever yours,
Jane.

WIVES

MADAME D'EPINAY TO HER HUSBAND

Separated later from her brutal husband, she formed friendships with many writers, especially Rousseau.

March, 1746.

THAT! My love, my angel, you are gone. You were able to go away and leave me for six months! No, I shall never resist the tedium of so long an absence. It has lasted only four hours and is already insupportable. I engaged Mme. de Maupeons to come and keep me company; at present I am annoyed that she should come to disturb the only consolation I desire, that of writing to you. Oh! my tender love, will you forgive me if I curse the cause which prevents me following you? I gave way too easily to my mother's fears: a three-months' increase in size has never prevented travelling; on the contrary. Yesterday, I was happy; I was still so this morning; and now I am no longer so. I have not even the hope of tranquillity for the next six months. I want to pass my days in writing to you, my nights in thinking of you. Never leave me in ignorance of what you do; above all look after your health; believe that my life is attached to yours. If the slightest accident occurred to you! But I have no need to exaggerate my affliction to feel it acutely. What fears I shall have until I get news of you! One thing above all makes me impatient; it is that you do not sufficiently feel the necessity of foreseeing all the little accidents which might happen. Perhaps you would be more far-sighted for others. Stay, imagine that it is I whom you are to take care of, and treat yourself as you would treat me. With that, I should be tranquil.

Good-bye, my dear love. Ah! if you suffer as much as I do by our separation, I pity you!

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MARGARET DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE TO THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

The writer had been married 22 years. She was the principal contributor to their joint literary works in 12 volumes, consisting of dramas and aphoristic reflections. Lamb described her biography of her husband as "a jewel for which no casket is good enough."

London, 1667.

CERTAINLY, my Lord, you have had as many enemies and as many friends as ever any one particular person had; nor do I so much wonder at it, since I, a woman, cannot be exempt from the malice and aspersions of spiteful tongues which they cast upon my poor writings, some denying me to be the true authoress of them; for your grace remembers well, that those books I put out first to the judgment of this censorious age were accounted not to be written by a woman, but that somebody else had writ and published them in my name; by which your lordship was moved to prefix an epistle before one of them in my vindication, wherein you assure the world, upon your honour, that what was written and printed in my name was my own; and I have also made known that your lordship was my only tutor, in declaring to me what you had found and observed by your own experience; for I being young when your lordship married me, could not have much knowledge of the world; but it pleased God to command his servant Nature to endue me with a poetical and philosophical genius, even from my birth; for I did write some books in that kind before I was twelve years of age, which for want of good method and order I would never divulge. But though the world would not believe that those conceptions and fancies which I writ were my own, but transcended my capacity, yet they found fault, that they were defective for want of learning, and on the other side, they said I had pluckt feathers out of the universities; which was a very preposterous judgment. Truly, my lord, I confess that for want of scholarship, I

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could not express myself so well as otherwise I might have done in those philosophical writings I published first; but after I was returned with your lordship into my native country, and led a retired country life, I applied myself to the reading of philosophical authors, on purpose to learn those names and words of art that are used in schools; which at first were so hard to me, that I could not understand them but was fain to guess at the sense of them by the whole context, and so writ them down, as I found them in those authors; at which my readers did wonder, and thought it impossible that a woman could have so much learning and understanding in terms of art and scholastical expressions; so that I and my books are like the old apologue mentioned in Aesop, of a father and his son who rid on an ass. (Here follows a long narrative of this fable, which she applies to herself in these words:—) The old man seeing he could not please mankind in any manner, and having received so many blemishes and aspersions for the sake of his ass, was at last resolved to drown him when he came to the next bridge. But I am not so passionate to burn my writings for the various humours of mankind, and for their finding fault; since there is nothing in this world, be it the noblest and most commendable action whatsoever, that shall escape blameless. As for my being the true and only authoress of them, your lordship knows best; and my attending servants are witness, that I have had none but my own thoughts, fancies, and speculations, to assist me; and as soon as I set them down I send them to those that are to transcribe them, and fit them for the press; whereof, since there have been several, and amongst them such as only could write a good hand, but neither understand orthography, nor had any learning (I being then in banishment, with your lordship, and not able to maintain learned secretaries), which hath been a great disadvantage to my poor works, and the cause that they have been printed so false and so full of errors; for besides that I want also skill in scholarship and true writing, I did many times not peruse the copies that were transcribed, lest they should disturb my following conceptions; by which neglect, as I said,

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many errors are slipt into my works, which, yet I hope, learned and impartial men will soon rectify, and look more upon the sense than carp at words. I have been a student even from childhood; and since I have been your lordship's wife, I have lived for the most part a strict and retired life, as is best known to your lordship; and therefore my censurers cannot know much of me, since they have little or no acquaintance with me. 'Tis true I have been a traveller both before and after I was married to your lordship, and some times shown myself at your lordship's command in public places or assemblies, but yet I converse with few. Indeed, my lord, I matter not the censures of this age, but am rather proud of them; for it shows that my actions are more than ordinary, and according to the old proverb, it is better to be envied than pitied; for I know well that it is merely out of spite and malice whereof this present age is so full that none can escape them, and they'll make no doubt to stain even your lordship's loyal, noble, and heroic actions, as well as they do mine; though yours have been of war and fighting, mine of contemplating and writing; yours were performed publicly in the field, mine privately in my closet; yours had many thousand eye-witnesses; mine none but my waiting-maids. But the great God, that hitherto bless's both your grace and me, will, I question not, preserve both our fames to after ages.

Your grace's honest wife and humble servant,

M. Newcastle.

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MRS. SHERIDAN TO RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

The story of Sheridan's meeting with the beautiful Miss Linleys, of Bath, and of his elopement with one of them to France, of his fighting duels and finally marrying her in 1773, is one of the liveliest stories in the lively social history of the eighteenth century. His wife was a famous singer before her marriage.

i

(1776.)

MY dearest love,—I shall call at the office (of the theatre) for the chance of seeing you, though I am afraid it will be in vain; but I will write again to beg you will come to us in the evening, for indeed, my dear Sheri, I am never so happy as when you partake of my amusements, and when I see you cheerful and contented with me. Your note had a tinge of melancholy in it that vexed me, because I know my own heart and that it has not a thought or wish that would displease you, could you see it. I shall not, therefore, enjoy this party to-night unless you are of it. We shall not go from Mrs. Nugent's till half-past ten, I daresay. The girls are to come in the coach to me there by ten, to go with us, and I shall direct them to call at the House of Commons for you; if it should be up before, leave word where you are to be, and they shall call for you anywhere else. I don't suppose it is necessary to be drest, but if the House sits late and you cannot come, at least send me one little line to make me happy for the rest of the night. If by accident the coach should miss you, Mrs. N. lives in Portman Square. God bless thee, my dear one; believe that I love thee, and will love thee for ever.

ii

(1776).

My dearest love,—nothing can equal my disappointment on receiving your note. We expected you last night, and sat up till two this morning, and waited dinner till

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five to-day. I wish that, instead of Ned, you had sent the horses, that we might have come to you, for I almost despair of seeing you to-morrow at Heston. Do you really long to see me? And as nothing but business detained you from me? Dear, dear, Sheri, don't be angry. I cannot love you and be perfectly satisfied at such a distance from you. I depended upon your coming to-night, and shall not recover my spirits till we meet. Pray send the horses to-night, that I may be able to sett off early to-morrow. The weather has been so bad we have not been able to stir out of the house, so that you may suppose we have been comfortably dull, and this additional mortification has made both Mary (Mrs. Tickell) and myself so cross that, I believe, nobody would envy us our *tete-a-tete* to-night.

I wish I could share your vexations with you, my poor love; but indeed I do so in imagination, though I am afraid that will not lighten your burdens. But don't fret, my dearest, for, let what will happen, we must be happy, if I can believe your constant assurances of affection. I could draw such a picture of happiness of you that it would almost make me wish to overthrow all our present schemes of future affluence and grandeur.

iii

(1776.)

My dear Dick,—though I do not yet despair of seeing you to-night, I write for fear you should be unavoidably detained again, for I fretted very much last night that I had not done so, as I thought you would have liked to have received a “fiff” from me this morning when it was too late to send you one. Your note from Sevenoaks found me alone in very bad spirits indeed. It comforted me a little, but I cannot be happy while you are otherwise, whatever you may think to the contrary. Whilst I live in the world and among people of the world, I own to you that I have not courage to act differently from them. I mean no harm. I do none. My vanity is flattered, perhaps, by the attentions and preference which some men show

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towards me; but that is all. They know I care for nothing but you, and that I laugh to scorn anything that looks like sentiment or love. I feel naturally inclined to prefer the society of those who I think are partial to me. Lord F. and H. Greville both appear to like me, that is to say, as far as laughing and talking goes. As to anything serious, even if they were inclined to think of it, they know me too well to risk being turned into ridicule for the attempt. I never miss an opportunity of declaring my sentiments on the subject, and I am perfectly convinced they have no other views in seeking my society than that of amusing and being amused.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MARGARET KLOPSTOCK TO SAMUEL RICHARDSON

Margaret, or Meta, Moller, was born in Hamburg, 1728. In 1751 the famous Frederick Gottlieb Klopstock, "the Milton of Germany," became acquainted with her. In the two following letters to the English novelist, Richardson, she tells the story of her marriage. The popularity of Richardson's novels in Germany had made this enthusiastic German lady a devoted admirer. She did not dare to write to the author of "Clarissa Harlowe" until her marriage to the distinguished Klopstock had given her confidence. Her letters were written in a naïve English, too charming and characteristic for anyone to wish to change. A pathetic interest attaches to the fact that she died in November, 1758.

i

Hamburg, March 14, 1758.

You will know all that concerns me. Love, dear Sir, is all that concerns me ! and love shall be all what I will tell you in this letter.

In one happy night I read my husband's poem, the *Messiah*. I was extremely touched with. The next day I asked one of his friends, who was the author of this poem? and this was the first time I heard Klopstock's name. I believe I felt immediately in love with him. At the least, my thoughts were ever with him filled, especially because his friend told me very much of his character. But I had no hopes ever to see him, when quite unexpectedly, I heard he should pass through Hamburg. I wrote immediately to the same friend, for procuring by his means that I might see the author of the *Messiah*, when in Hamburg. He told him that a certain girl at Hamburg wished to see him and, for all recommendation, showed him some letters, in which I made bold to criticise Klopstock's verses. Klopstock came, and came to me, I must confess that, though greatly prepossessed of his qualities, I never

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thought him the amiable youth whom I found him. This made its effect.

After having seen him two hours, I was obliged to pass the evening in a company, which had never been so wearisome to me. I could not speak, I could not hear, I thought I saw nothing but Klopstock. I saw him the next day and the following and we were very seriously friends. But the fourth day he departed! It was a strong hour, the hour of his departure. He wrote soon after and from that time on our correspondence began to be a very diligent one. I sincerely believed my love to be friendship. I spoke with my friends of nothing but Klopstock and showed his letters. They rallied at me and said I was in love. I rallied them again and said they must have a very friendshipless heart if they had no idea of friendship to a man as well as to a woman. Thus it continued eight months, in which time my friends found as much love in Klopstock's letters as in me. I perceived it likewise, but I would not believe it. At the last Klopstock said plainly that he loved and I startled as for a wrong thing. I answered that it was no love but friendship as it was what I felt for him, we had not seen one another enough to love. (As if love must have more time than friendship!) This was sincerely my meaning till Klopstock came again to Hamburg. This he did a year after we had seen one another for the first time. We saw, we were friends, we loved and we believed that we loved; and a short time after I could even tell Klopstock that I loved. But we were obliged to wait another two years for our wedding. My mother would not let me marry a stranger. I could marry then without her consentment as by the death of my father, my fortune depended not on her, but this was a horrible idea for me and thank Heaven that I prevailed by prayers. At this time knowing Klopstock, she loves him as her lively son and thanks God that she has not persisted. We married and I am the happiest wife in the world. In some few months, it will be four years that I am so happy and still I dote on Klopstock as if he were my bridegroom. He is good, really good, in all his actions, in all the foldings of

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his heart. I know him, and sometimes I think that if we knew others in the same manner, the better we should find them. For it may be that an action displeases us which would please us, if we knew its true aim and whole extent. No one of my friends is so happy as I am, but no one has had the courage to marry as I did. They have married—as people marry and they are happy—as people are happy.

M. Klopstock.

ii

Hamburg, August 26, 1758.

Why think you Sir that I answer so late? I will tell you my reasons. Have you not guessed that I, summing up all my happiness, and not speaking of children, had none? Yes, Sir, this has been my only wish ungratified for these four years. But thanks to God, I am in full hope to be a mother in the month of November. The little preparations for my child (and they are so dear to me) have taken so much time, that I could not answer your letter, nor give you the promised scenes of the *Messiah*. This is likewise the reason why I am still here, for properly we dwell in Copenhagen. Our staying here is only on a visit (but a long one) which we pay my family. My husband has been obliged to make a little visit alone to Copenhagen, I not being able to travel yet. He is yet absent—a cloud over my happiness. He will soon return—but what does that help? he is yet equally absent. We write to each other every post—but what are letters to presence! But I will speak no more of this little cloud. I will only tell my happiness. But I cannot tell how I rejoice. A son of my dear Klopstock. Oh, when shall I have him? It is long since I made the remark that the children of geniuses are not geniuses. No children at all, bad sons, or, at the most, lovely daughters, like you and Milton. But a daughter or a son, only with a good heart, without genius, I will nevertheless, love dearly.

This is no letter but only a newspaper of your Hamburg daughter. When I have my husband and my child, I will write you more (if God gives me health and life).

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You will think that I shall be not a mother only, but a nurse also; though the latter (thank God! that the former is not so too) is quite against fashion and good manners and though nobody can think it *possible* to be always with the child at home.

M. Klopstock.

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MARGARET KLOPSTOCK TO FREDERICK GOTTLIEB KLOPSTOCK

The first of these letters is that of a fiancée, but finds a convenient place here as part of the series in which, writing both to Richardson and to her husband, Margaret appears as a most devoted wife.

i

—, 1752.

I MUST write to you this evening and you will find my letter at Copenhagen. Best of men, you ought to find in me a wife desirous of imitating you as far as possible. I will, indeed I will resemble you as much as I can. My soul leans upon yours. This is the evening upon which we read your *Ode to God*. Do you remember that it is so? If I can preserve as much fortitude as I have acquired this evening, I will not shed a tear at our parting. You will leave me but I shall receive you again, and receive you as your wife. Alas, but another day and you will be far away, far away from me and it will be long before I see you again, but I must restrain my grief. God will be with you, your God and mine. When you are gone, I shall be firmer than I am now, as I have already assured you. I trust to our gracious God that he will restore you to me and thus make me happy. He knows that through you I shall be continually improving. He has already bestowed on us so much happiness that I trust he will complete our felicity. Begin your journey then, only let me weep, indeed I cannot help it. May God be with you; O my God, it is Klopstock for whom I pray. Be Thou with him, show Thy mercy to me by granting this request. If my gratitude be acceptable to Thee, Thou knowest how grateful I am. Oh, Thou All-Merciful, how much felicity hast Thou already vouchsafed to me, felicity for which I could not have presumed to ask. Oh, still be gracious to my Klopstock. I recommend him to Thee!

Meta

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ii

—, 1758.

I have you no longer, my Klopstock, you are already far from me. May you be safe. What are you doing now? I wish I could answer that question. But I do know, at least, I hope so. You are well, you are tranquil, you are thinking of your Meta, of your ever beloved Meta. You are thinking of me as I ever am of you, for your heart and affection are like my own. I could not imagine that absence would be so very oppressive. What is life without you? but what is life *with* you? Now everything reminds me of the time which is mine no more, of my happiness in always having near me my best beloved friend, who loves me so tenderly. Alas! I shall not see you again for a long, long time, but if I knew that you had arrived safely at Copenhagen, I think I should be easy in mind. Yes, my Klopstock, be assured that I am as calm as I can possibly be in your absence. I am for ever yours, you love me and I am careful for your sake. I wish you could see how I restrain my tears. Our friends are very kind and take tender care of me. They endeavour to make everything as pleasant for me as they can, but what is all this without you? I am expecting Schmidt, who brought me your last farewell yesterday and told me how much you had wished to return from the Post-house. My best friend, farewell! My constant prayers attend you.

Meta.

iii

—, 1758.

I could not write to you till this moment, my beloved Klopstock; I am in such good health that I have been out every day and am now returned from Schmidt's house here. With all sincerity I assure you that I have not been so well since 1749. Imagine how much joy I must feel in the hope that I am now restored for you. I did not expect ever to be as well as I am now. Praised be our God for it! and you will praise Him with me. Yesterday evening, when I had returned from a visit and enjoyed a very

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pleasant hour, I said to myself, perhaps my Klopstock is now worshipping God with me and at that thought, my devotions became more fervent. How delightful it is to address ourselves to God, to feel His influence on our minds! Thus, how happy may we not be, even in this world, but, as you rightly say, if our happiness is so great here, what will it be hereafter, and then we shall never be separated! Farewell, my beloved! I shall think of you continually to-morrow. The holiest thoughts harmonise with my idea of you, of you who are holier than I am, who love our great Creator not less than I do; more I think you cannot love Him, not more but in a more exalted manner. How happy I am to belong to you. Through you I shall be continually improving in piety and virtue. I cannot express the feelings of my heart on this subject but they are very different from what they were half a year ago. Before I was beloved by you, I dreaded my greatest happiness, I was uneasy lest it should withdraw me from God. How greatly I was mistaken! It is true that adversity leads us to God but such felicity as mine cannot withdraw me from Him or I could not be worthy to enjoy it. On the contrary, it brings me nearer to Him! The sensibility, the gratitude, the joy, all the feelings attendant on happiness, make my devotion more fervent.

iv

Sept. 18th, 1758.

Your thoughtlessness couldn't have played you a worse trick than to send to Soroe the letter in which I hoped for certain information respecting your journey. I don't know how I shall feel when I see you again. When I think of it I am as agitated as when I think of hearing the voice of my first child. Yesterday I had an airing for four hours. I did not go up any roads but the Lubeck, though I knew quite well you would not arrive so soon. But it was not possible for me to drive any other way. Adieu, till to-morrow; let me know you have set off, that I have written this letter to no purpose. Only, my beloved! come, come, come!

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v

The following was her last letter to Klopstock. She died six weeks later.

Sept. 26th, 1758.

I must indulge my fancy and write to you at Lubeck—to Copenhagen, no more. God will be with you. I have prayed for you with my strongest faith. I received your letter just as I was beginning to feel quite dejected. I have not time to write much. I should now drive down to Wandsbeck every day, but that I have had a cold in the head and eyes. This will make me look less cheerful than I should have done, if you had arrived last week but otherwise I am perfectly well.

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JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO THOMAS CARLYLE

Jane Baillie Welsh married Carlyle in 1826. They had moved from Craigenputtock to Cheyne Walk only the previous year. Her mother soon afterwards returned to Nithsdale, where Jane's people lived.

Chelsea, October 12, 1835.

. . . . Mother and I have fallen naturally into a fair division of labour, and we keep a very tidy house. Sereetha has attained the unhoped-for perfection of getting up at half after six of her own accord, lighting the parlour fire, and actually placing the breakfast things (*nil desperandum me duce!*). I get up at half after seven, and prepare the coffee and bacon-ham (which is the life of me, making me always hungrier the more I eat of it). Mother, in the interim, makes her bed and sorts her room. After breakfast, Mother descends to the inferno, where she jingles and scours, and from time to time scolds Sereetha till all is right and tight there. I, above stairs, sweep the parlour, blacken the grate,—make the room look cleaner than it has been since the days of Grace Macdonald; then mount aloft to make my own bed (for I was resolved to enjoy the privilege of having a bed of my own); then clean myself (as the servants say), and sit down to the Italian lesson. A bit of meat roasted at the oven suffocating misery of the last two hours. I know always, even when I seem to you most exacting, that whatever happens to me is nothing like so bad as I deserve. But you shall hear all how it was.

. . . . Not a line from you on my Birthday—on the fifth day! I did not burst out crying, did not faint, did not do anything absurd, so far as I know, but I walked back again, without speaking a word; and with such a tumult of wretchedness in my heart as you who know me can conceive. And then I shut myself in my own room to fancy everything that was most tormenting. Were you, finally, so out of patience with me that you had resolved to write to me no more at all? Had you gone to Addiscombe, and found no leisure there to remember my existence? Were you taken

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ill, so ill that you could not write? That last idea made me mad to get off to the railway, and back to London. Oh, mercy! what a two hours I had of it! And just when I was at my wit's end, I heard Julia crying out thro' the house: "Mrs. Carlyle, Mrs. Carlyle! are you there? Here is a letter for you!" And so there was after all! The postmistress had overlooked it, and given it to Robert, when he went afterwards, not knowing that we had been. I wonder what Love-letter was ever received with such thankfulness! Oh, my dear! I am not fit for living in the world with this organisation. I am as much broken to pieces by that little accident as if I had come thro' an attack of cholera or typhus fever. I cannot even steady my hand to write decently. But I felt an irresistible need of thanking you, by return of post. Yes, I have kissed the dear little Card-case; and now I will lie down a while, and try to get some sleep, at least to quieten myself. I will try to believe—oh, why cannot I believe it, once for all—that, with all my faults and follies, I am "dearer to you than any earthly creature!" I will be better for Geraldine here; she is become very quiet and nice, and as affectionate for me as ever.

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HELOISE TO ABELARD

The overworked word "tragic" applies supremely to Heloise as a wife. Abelard had been brutally mutilated by order of the enraged uncle, Fulbert, who was Canon of the school of Notre Dame, where she had been Abelard's pupil before becoming his secret wife and bearing him a son. This letter was written about 1120, after she had entered the convent of Argenteuil. Abelard's reply to this feminine logic was a dialectical justification of the ways of God.

O UNHAPPY of the unhappy, ill-fated of the ill-fated, must it be that thy love has raised me among all women only that I should be precipitated from a greater height by a stroke as grievous to thee as to me. The greater the altitude, the heavier the fall. Among women of noble race and high rank, is there one whose happiness has exceeded or even equalled mine? Is there one who has been made to fall lower and into such an abyss of pains? What glory was mine through thee; through thee what a blow strikes me! I have been made to know one excess or the other; in the good things as in the bad no measure has been kept. I was made first the happiest of women so that I might be made the most unhappy; so that while I thought upon all I had lost the tortures of grief should equal the extent of the loss, the bitterness of my regrets equal the joy of possession; so that to the intoxication of pleasure should succeed the oppression of supreme despair.

And that the outrage might compel a greater indignation, all the laws of equity have been reversed against us. In effect, while we tasted the delights of an unquiet love, or, to avail myself of a harsher but more expressive term, while we gave ourselves up to fornication, the severity of heaven spared us; and it was when we had legitimised that illegitimate love, when we had covered with the veils of marriage the shame of our trespasses, that the anger of the Lord roughly laid hand on us; and our purified bed

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did not find grace before one who had so long tolerated its stain.

For men surprised in the guiltiest adultery, the penalty thou hast suffered would have been a punishment severe enough. And that which others merit for adultery, thou hast incurred, thou, by marriage, which seemed to thee a reparation for all thy wrong-doing. That which adulterous women draw upon their accomplices, thy legitimate spouse has drawn upon thee, and that, not since we gave ourselves up to former pleasures, but when, already momentarily separated, we lived in chastity, thou at Paris, at the head of the Schools, and I, according to thy directions, at Argenteuil, in the company of nuns. When we were thus separated so that we should be able to devote ourselves with greater zeal and freedom, thou to the directing of the Schools, I to prayer and meditating the holy books; it was while we were leading such a life, as saintly as it was pure, that thou alone in thy body paid for a sin common to us both. We were two in the fault; thou hast been sole in the punishment. Thou art the least culpable, and it is thou who has expiated all.

In effect, must thou not have the less to fear from God, since, on account of those traitors, thou hast given such ample satisfaction in abasing thyself for me, in raising up me and all my family? Unhappy that I am, to have come into the world to be the cause of so great a crime! Women will always thus be the flail of great men. This is why it is written in *Proverbs*, of how to guard oneself from Woman: "Now hearken to me, my son, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thy heart be drawn after woman; wander not in her paths; for she has brought down and overthrown a great number. She has slain the strongest. Her house is the road of hell; it conducts to the deeps of death." And in *Ecclesiastes*: "I considered all things with the eyes of my soul and I found woman more bitter than death; she is the hunter's net, her heart is as a trap, her hands are as chains; whoso is pleasing to God shall escape her, but the sinner shall be her prey."

In the beginning of the world, the first woman caused

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man's banishment from the earthly paradise; and she whom the Lord created to be a helpmeet unto him became the instrument of his defeat. That mighty man of Nazareth, that man of the Lord of whom an angel had announced the birth, it was Delilah alone who vanquished him, it was she who delivered him to his enemies, deprived him of sight and reduced him to such despair that he ended by burying himself with his enemies under the ruins of the temple. The Sage of sages, Solomon, it was the woman to whom he was united who caused him to lose his reason and brought him to such a pitch of folly that he, whom the Lord had chosen to build His temple in preference to his father David who yet was a just man, he fell into idolatry and remained plunged in it to the end of his days, faithless to the worship of the true God, of whom by his writings and his discourses he had celebrated the glory and spread the teaching. It was against his wife, who excited him to blasphemy, that Job, that saintly man, had to maintain the final and the hardest of battles. The cunning tempter well knew—he had so many times recognised this truth by experience—that men have always in their wives a ready cause of downfall. . . .

. . . . Please God, I will make a worthy penitence for this particular sin, a penitence which, by the length of expiation, shall balance, if that be possible, the cruel chastisement which has been inflicted upon thee; please Heaven, I may myself suffer as is just, in the contrition of my soul, what thou hast suffered in thy flesh, and during all my life, that thus I may offer thee, if not God, a kind of satisfaction!

If indeed I must reveal in its nakedness all the weakness of my miserable heart, find not in me a repentance capable of appeasing God; I cannot prevent myself blaming His pitiless cruelty in the matter of the outrage inflicted upon thee and I only offend Him by my rebellious muttering at His decrees, so far am I from seeking by penitance to appease His anger. Can one say, indeed, that one is penitent, whatever the treatment inflicted on the body, while the soul still preserves the idea of sinning and burns

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with the same passions as before? It is easy, no doubt, to confess its faults and to accuse oneself of them, and even to submit one's body to exterior macerations; but what is difficult is to tear one's soul from desires of the sweetest pleasure. . . .

These pleasures of love which we have tasted together were so sweet to me that the memory cannot displease me nor can they be erased from my mind. Whichever way I turn, they present themselves, they thrust themselves upon my gaze with the desires which they awaken; their deceiving images do not spare even my sleep. In the solemnity of the mass, when prayer should be purer than at any other time, the licentious pictures of these pleasures so take this miserable heart that I am more occupied with their baseness than by prayer. I ought to groan for the faults I have committed, and I sigh after those which I can no more commit.

It is not only that which we have done, it is the hours, it is the places which have witnessed what we have done, which are so deeply graven on my heart with thy image, that I find myself again with thee in the same places, during the same hours, doing the same things: even asleep I find no repose. Sometimes the movements of my body betray the thoughts in my soul, words escape me which I cannot keep back. Ah! I am indeed very unhappy, and this plaint of a groaning soul was well made for me: "Wretch that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" Please Heaven, I may be able to add with truth what follows: "The grace of God, by Jesus Christ, our Lord!" That grace, O my well-beloved, has come to thee without thine asking; one single wound of thy body, in allaying in thee the stings of desire, has cured all the sores of thy soul; and while God seemed to be treating thee with severity, He showed Himself, helpful, in reality; such is the good doctor who does not fear to make his patient suffer in order to assure his cure. But with me, on the contrary, the fires of a youth ardent in pleasure and the experience I have had of the sweetest delights inflame those stings of the flesh, and the assaults are the more pressing the weaker is the nature subjected to them.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

ABIGAIL ADAMS TO JOHN ADAMS

See also under "Fiancées": Abigail Smith. She had been married two years at the time of writing the first of the following letters. She seconded her husband's opposition to the English oppression and joined in the campaign for independence. Adams became President of the United States in 1797.

Weymouth (Mass.),
Sunday Evening, Sept. 14, 1767

i

MY dearest friend, The Doctor talks of setting out to-morrow for New Braintree. I did not know but that he might chance to see you in his way there. I know from the tender affection you bear me and our little ones, that you will rejoice to hear that we are well. Our son is much better than when you left home, and our daughter rocks him to sleep with the song of "Come, papa, come home to my brother Johnny." Sunday seems a more lonely day to me than any other when you are absent; for, though I may be compared to those climates which are deprived of the sun half the year, yet upon a Sunday you commonly afforded us your benign influence. I am now at Weymouth, my father brought me here last night; to-morrow I return home, where I hope soon to receive the dearest of friends, and the tenderest of husbands, with that unabated affection which has for years past, and will whilst the vital spark lasts, burn in the bosom of your affectionate,

A. Adams.

ii

Braintree, 16 October, 1774.

My much loved friend, I dare not express to you, at three hundred miles' distance, how ardently I long for your return. I have some very miserly wishes, and cannot consent to your spending one hour in town, till, at least,

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I have had you twelve. The idea plays about my heart, unnerves my hand, whilst I write, awakens all the tender sentiments, that years have increased and matured, and which, when with me, were every day dispensing to you. The whole collected stock of ten weeks' absence knows not how to brook any longer restraint, but will break forth and flow through my pen. May the like sensations enter thy breast, and (spite of all the weighty cares of state) mingle themselves with those I wish to communicate; for, in giving them utterance, I have felt more sincere pleasure than I have known since the 10th of August.* Many have been the anxious hours I have spent since that day; the threatening aspect of our public affairs, the complicated distress of this province, the arduous and perplexed business in which you are engaged, have all conspired to agitate my bosom with fears and apprehensions to which I have heretofore been a stranger; and, far from thinking the scene closed, it looks as though the curtain was but just drawn, and only the first scene of the infernal plot disclosed; and whether the end will be tragical, Heaven alone knows. You cannot be, I know, nor do I wish to see you, an inactive spectator; but, if the sword be drawn, I bid adieu to all domestic felicity, and look forward to that country, where there are neither wars nor rumours of war, in a firm belief, that through the mercy of its King, we shall both rejoice there together.

I greatly fear that the arm of treachury and violence is lifted over us, as a scourge and heavy punishment from Heaven for our numerous advantages. If we expect to inherit the blessings of our fathers, we should return a little more to their primitive simplicity of manners, and not sink into inglorious ease. We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them. I have spent one Sabbath in town since you left. I saw no difference in respect to ornament, etc.; but in the country you must look for that virtue, of which you find but small glimmerings in the metropolis. Indeed, they have

* On which her husband had started on some of his travels as a diplomatic delegate during the quarrel with the English Government.

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not the advantages, nor the resolution, to encourage our own manufactories, which people in the country have. To the mercantile part, it is considered as throwing away their own bread; but they must retrench their expenses, and be content with a small share of gain, for they will find but few who will wear their livery. As for me I will seek wool and flax, and work willingly with my hands; and, indeed, there is occasion for all our industry and economy. You mention the removal of our books, etc., from Boston; I believe they are safe there, and it would incommode the gentlemen to remove them, as they would not then have a place to repair to for study. I suppose they would not choose to be at the expense of boarding out. Mr. Williams, I believe, keeps pretty much with his mother. Mr. Hill's father had some thoughts of removing up to Braintree, provided he could be accommodated with a house, which he finds very difficult.

I rejoice at the favourable account you give me of your health. May it be continued to you. My health is much better than it was last fall; some folks say I grow very fat. I venture to write almost any thing in this letter, because I know the care of the bearer. He will be most sadly disappointed if you should be broken up before he arrives; as he is very desirous of being introduced by you to a number of gentlemen of respectable character. I almost envy him, that he should see you before I can. Mr. Thaxter and Mr. Rice present their regard to you. Uncle Quincy, too, sends his love to you. He is very good to call and see me, and so have many other of my friends been. Colonel Warren and lady were here on Monday, and send their love to you. The Colonel promised to write. Mrs. Warren will spend a day or two, on her return, with me. I told Betsey* to write to you; she says she would, if you were her husband.

Your mother sends her love to you; and all your family, too numerous to name, desire to be remembered. You will receive letters from two, who are as earnest to write to papa, as if the welfare of a kingdom depended upon it.

* Her sister, afterwards Mrs. John Shaw

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If you can give any guess, within a month, let me know when you think of returning.

Your most affectionate

Abigail Adams.

iii

In the following year she joined her husband in France, where he was at first a Delegate to the Continental Congress, and later served on various diplomatic missions for the new United States. "My dear Parent," refers to her father, the Nonconformist clergyman who had recently died.

19th November, 1783.

My dearest friend, Your favour dated at Amsterdam in July, was last evening handed me, and this evening your letter of the 10th of September, by Colonel Ogden, reached me. I had for some time supposed that the delay of public business would retard your return; and, knowing that the definite treaty was not completed until September, and that the commercial treaty was still to form, I had little reason to expect you, unless your state of health required an immediate resignation of all public business. Your letter, therefore, which informs me of your determination to pass another winter abroad, is by no means unexpected. That we must pass it with a vast ocean between us is a reflection no ways pleasurable, yet this must be the case. I had much to do to persuade myself to venture a summer passage, but a winter one I never could think of encountering. I am too much of a coward. It is now the middle of November. It would be December or January before I could possibly adjust all my affairs; and I know of no person with whom I am acquainted, except Mr. Jackson of Newburyport, who is now going abroad. Mr. Temple and family sail this month. Besides, there is a stronger objection with me than even a winter's voyage. Congress have not appointed any person yet to the Court of Britain. There are many who wish for that place. Many who have a more splendid title, and many more thousands

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to claim it with. I know Mr. Jay has written pressingly to Congress in your favor, and absolutely declined it himself; but whether you will finally be the person is among the uncertain events. One thing, however, is certain; that I do not wish it. I should have liked very well to have gone to France and resided there a year; but to think of going to England in a public character, and engaging, at my time of life, in scenes quite new, attended with dissipation, parade, and nonsense, I am sure I should make an awkward figure. The retired domestic circle, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," are my ideas of happiness, and my most ardent wish is to have you return and become master of the feast. My health is infirm. I am still subject to a severe nervous pain in my head, and fatigue of any kind will produce it. Neither of us appears to be built for duration. Would to Heaven, the few remaining days allotted us might be enjoyed together. It has been my misfortune, that I could not attend to your health, watch for your repose, alleviate your hours of anxiety and make you a home wherever you resided. More, says a skilful doctor, depends upon the nurse than the physician. My determination is to tarry at home this winter; and, if I cannot prevail upon you to return to me in the spring, you well know that I may be drawn to you, provided there is any stability in Congress. One strong tie, which held me here, is dissolved. My dear parent used to say, "You must never go, child, whilst I live." It is far from being my inclination.

Mr. Thaxter will be able to give me, when he arrives, the best intelligence upon the subject. I wrote largely to you last week. I hope this letter will go by a French brig.

Adieu, and believe me, whether present or absent,

Most affectionately yours,

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THE EMPRESS ALEXANDRA TO NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA

In the light of after events, the passionate letters of the woman whose influence over the last Russian Czar hastened the disasters impending, are among the most tragic ever written by an exalted man's wife. "Our Friend" is Rasputin.

Tsarskoje Selo, Dec. 5th, 1916.

MY own sweetheart, From the depths of my loving heart I send you warmest, heartiest good wishes & many tender blessings for yr. dear Namesday. May yr. patron saint quite particularly be near you and keep you in safeguard. Everything that a devoted, unutterably loving heart can only wish you—Sunny wishes you. Strength, firmness, unwavering decision, calm, peace, success, brightest sunshine—rest & happiness at last after yr. hard, hard fighting. In thoughts I clasp you tightly to my heart, let your sweet, weary head rest upon my breast. With the candles my prayers rise in burning fervour & brightness for you—to-night shall go to Church & to-morrow our fogies, court ones, will be there to congratulate after mass.—How can I thank you enough for the unexpected, intense joy of yr. precious letter—it was a ray of warming sunshine in my lonely heart. After you both left, I went to Znamenia. Later received Ilyin, Vsevol. of my supply trains—Bagration-M. of the "Savage Division"—will try and see you at the Headquarters—awfully interesting all he tells about the tribes under him—& the Abreki, who behave very well.

After dinner went to the hospital—to forget oneself—I thank God I could help you a little—you too, Sweet one, become firm & unwavering, show the masterhand & mind. Do not bend down to a man like Trepov (whom you cannot either trust or respect). You have said yr. say & hd yr. fight about Protopov & it shall not be in vain we suffered—stick to him, be firm, don't give in—as then never more any peace, they will begin worrying you in the future yet worse

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when you don't agree, as they see that by persistent obstinacy they force you to give in—as hard as they, I mean Trepov & Rodzianko (with the evil) on one side—I shall stand against them (with God's holy man) don't you stick to them, but to us, who live only for you Baby & Russia. To follow our Friend's counsels, lovy—I assure is right—He prays so hard day & night for you—& He has kept you where you are—only be as convinced as I am & as I proved it to Ella and shall for ever—then all will go well. In les “Amis de Dieu” one of the old men of God said, that a country, where a man of God helps the Sovereign, will never be lost & its true, only one must listen, trust & ask advice—not think He does not know. God opens everything to Him, that is why people, who do not grasp His soul, so immensely admire. His wonderful brain—ready to understand anything; & when He blesses an undertaking, it succeeds, & if He advises people—one can be sure they are good—if they later on change that is already not His fault—but He will be less mistaken in people than we are—*experience in life* blessed by God. He entreats for Makarov to be quicker changed—and I fully agree. I told Sturmer that it was wrong he recommended him, that I told him that he is far from a devoted man, and now the chief thing is to find really devoted men—in deed & not only in words, & to them we must cling. Don't let Trepov deceive you about people. Protopopov & Shakhovskoy are only for us, I mean above all things devoted & love honestly & openly. And Dobrovolsky too. Should Nikolai Mikhailovitch turn (wh. God forbid), be hard & give it him for his letter & goings on in town—I send you Grigorovitch's paper, one sent me.

Went at 11 to Znamenia (which I more than ever love) & to the hospital—sat much. Now receive 4 officers, then we all sledge. Paul comes to tea then Poguliayev then Church & in the evening see our Friend, who will give strength. My *spirit* is firm & lives for you, you & you—my heart & soul. I wonder, whether you will have a review of the St. George's regiment, wld. be so nice—if not the 6th then another day, Ducky leaves to-night to

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see Missy & perhaps bring all the Children back, according to circumstances.

Now I must end. Sleep well and peacefully, beloved Angel. The Holy Virgin guards you & Gr. prays for you & we do all so hard.

I cover you with tenderest, passionately loving kisses & caresses & long to be of use & help in carrying yr. heavy Cross. God bless & protect you, my Nicky. Ever yr. very own Wify.

I hope you will like the book. The cushions are for yr. sofa, wh. is so empty. The ashtrays for the dinnertable or train.

Always near you sharing all—the good is coming the turn has begun.

ii

Tsarskoje Selo, Sept. 19th 1914.

My own, my very own sweet One, I am so happy for you that you can at last manage to go, as I know how deeply you have been suffering all this time—yr. restless sleep even has been a proof of it. It was a topic I on purpose did not touch, knowing & perfectly well understanding your feelings, at the same time realising that it is better you are not out at the head of the army. This journey will be a tiny comfort to you, & I trust you will manage to see many troops. I can picture to myself their joy seeing you & all your feelings—alas that I cannot be with you to see it all. It is more than ever hard to bid good-bye to you, my Angel—the blank after yr. departure is so intense! Then you, I know, notwithstanding all you will have to do, will still miss yr. little family & precious agoo wee one. He will quickly get better now that our Friend has seen him & that will be a relief to you.

May the news only be good whilst you are away, as to know you have hard news to bear alone, makes the heart bleed. Looking after wounded is my consolation & that is why the last morning I even wanted to go there whilst you were receiving, so as to keep my spirits up & not break

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down before you. Except all I go through with & our beloved country & men I suffer for my "small old home" & her troops & Ernie & Irene & many a friend in sorrow there—but how many go through the same. And then the shame, the humiliation to think that Germans should behave as they do! Egoistically I suffer horribly to be separated—we are not accustomed to it & I do so endlessly love my very own precious Boosy dear. Soon 20 years that I belong to you & what bliss it has been to be your very own little Wify!

How nice if you see dear Olga, it will cheer her up & do you good. I shall give you a letter & things for the wounded for her.

Lovy dear, my telegrams can't be very warm, as they go through so many military hands—but you will read all my love & longing between the lines. Sweetie, if in any way you do not feel quite the thing, you will be sure to call Feodorov, won't you—& have an eye on Fredericks.

My very most earnest prayers will follow you by day and night. I commend you into our Lord's safe keeping—may He guard, guide & lead you & bring you safe & sound back again.

I bless you & love you, as man was rarely been loved before—& kiss every dearly beloved place & press you tenderly to my own heart.

For ever yr. very own old

Wify.

The Image will lie this night under my cushion before I give it to you with my fervent blessing.

iii

Tsarskoje Selo, Aug. 22nd 1915.

My very own beloved One, I cannot find words to express all I want to—my heart is far too full. I only long to hold you tight in my arms & whisper words of intense love, courage, strength & endless blessings. More than hard to let you go alone, so completely alone—but God is very near to you, more than ever. You have fought this great

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fight for your country & throne—alone & with bravery & decision. Never have they seen such firmness in you before & it cannot remain without good fruit.

Do not fear for what remains behind—one must be severe & stop all at once. Lovy, I am here, don't laugh at silly old wify, but she has "trousers" on unseen, & I can get the old man to come & keep him up to be energetic—whenever I can be of the smallest use, tell me what to do—use me—at such a time God will give me strength to help you—because our souls are fighting for the right against the evil. It is all much deeper than appears to the eye—we, who have been taught to look at all from another side, see what the struggle here really is & means—you showing your mastery, proving yourself the *Autocrat* without which Russia cannot exist. Had you given in now in these different questions, they would have dragged out yet more of you. Being firm is the only saving—I know what it costs you, & have & do suffer hideously for you, forgive me, I beseech you, my Angel, for having left you no peace & worried you so much—but I too well know yr. marvelously gentle character—& you had to shake it off this time, had to win your fight alone against all. It will be a glorious page in yr. reign & Russian history the story of these weeks & days—& God, who is just & near you—will save your country & throne through your firmness.

A harder battle has rarely been fought, than yours & it will be crowned with success, only believe this.

Yr. faith has been tried—your trust—& you remained firm as a rock, for that you will be blessed. God anointed you at your coronation, he placed you where you stand & you have done your duty, be sure, quite sure of this & He forsaketh not His anointed. Our Friend's prayers arise night & day for you to Heaven & God will hear them.

Those who fear & cannot understand your actions, will be brought by events to realise your great wisdom. It is the beginning of the glory of yr. reign, He said so & I absolutely believe it. Your Sun is rising—& to-day it shines so brightly. And so will you charm all those great

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blunderers, cowards, lead astray, noisy, blind, narrow-minded & (dishonest, false) beings, this morning.

And your Sunbeam will appear to help you, your very own Child—won't that touch those hearts & make them realise what you are doing, & what they dared to wish to do, to shake your throne, to frighten you with internal black forebodings—only a bit of success out there & they will change. They will (?) disperse home into clean air & their minds will be purified & they carry the picture of you & yr. Son in their hearts with them.

I do hope Goremykin will agree to yr. choice of Khvostov—you need an energetic minister of the interior—should he be the wrong man, he can later be changed—no harm in that, at such times—but if energetic he may help splendidly & then the old man does not matter.

If you take him, then only wire to me “tail (Khovstov) alright” & I shall understand.

Let no talks worry you—am glad Dmitri won't be there now—snap up Voyeikov if he is stupid—am sure he is afraid of meeting people there who may think he was against Nikolasha & Orlov & to smoothe things, he begs you for Nikolasha—that would be the greatest fault & undo all you have so courageously done & the great internal fight would have been for nothing. Too kind, don't be, I mean not specially, as otherwise it would be dishonest, as still there have been things you were discontented with him about. Remind others about Misha, the Emperor's brother & then there is war there too.

All is for the good, as our Friend says, the worst is over. Now you speak to the Minister of war & he will take energetic measures, as soon as needed—but Khvostov, will see to that if you name him. When you leave, shall wire to Friend to-night through Ania—and He will particularly think of you. Only get Nikolasha's nomination quicker done—no dawdling, even if against their wish, sooner than that waiting & uncertainty & trying to influence you—it tires out one's heart.

I feel completely done up & only keep myself going with

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force—they shall not think that I am downhearted or frightened—but confident and calm.

Joy we went to those holy places together—for sure yr. dear Father quite particularly prays for you.

Give me some news as soon as you can—now am afraid for the moment N.P. wiring to Ania until I am sure nobody watches again.

Tell me the impression, if you can. Be firm to the end, let me be sure of that otherwise shall get quite ill from anxiety.

Bitter pain not to be with you—know what you feel, & the meeting with N. won't be agreeable—you did not trust him & now you know, what months ago our Friend said, that he was acting wrongly towards you & your country & wife—its not the people who would do harm to your people, but Nikolasha & set, Butchkov, Rodzianko, Samarin, etc.

Lovy, if you hear I am not so well, don't be anxious, I have suffered so terribly, & physically overtired myself these 2 days, & morally worried (& worry still till all is done at the Headquarters & Nikolasha gone) only then shall I feel calm—near you all is well—when out of sight others at once profit—you see they are afraid of me & so come to you when alone—they know I have a will of my own when I feel I am in the right—& you are now—we know it, so you make them tremble before your courage & will. God is with you & our Friend for you—all is well—& later all will be well & the army is everything—a few *strikes* nothing, in comparison, as can & shall be suppressed. The left are furious because all slips through their hands & their cards are clear to us & the game they wished to use Nikolasha for—even Shvedov knows it fr. there.

Now good night lovy, go straight to bed without tea with the rest & their long faces. Sleep long & well, you need rest after this strain & your heart needs calm hours.—God Almighty bless your undertaking. His holy Angels guard & guide you & bless the work of your hands. Please give this little Image of St. John the Warrior to

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Alexeiev with my blessing & fervent wishes. You have my Image I blessed you with last year.—I give no other as that carries my blessing & you have Gregory's St. Nicholas to guard & guide you. I always place a candle before St. Nicholas at Znamenje for you—& shall do, so to-morrow at 3 o'clock & before the Virgin. You will feel my soul near you.

I clasp you tenderly to my heart, kiss and caress you without end—want to show you all the intense love I have for you, warm, cheer, console, strengthen you, & make you sure of yourself. Sleep well my Sunshine, Russia's Saviour. Remember last night, how tenderly we clung to-gether. I shall yearn for yr. caresses—I never can have enough of them. And I still have the children, & you are all alone. Another time I must give you Baby for a bit to cheer you up.—

I kiss you without end & bless you. Holy Angels guard your slumber—I am near & with you for ever & ever & none shall separate us.—

Yr. very own wife

Sunny.

SECTION III

LOVERS

To love is the least of the faults of a loving woman.—*La Rochefoucauld*.

The woman who throws herself at a man's head will soon find herself at his feet.—*Desnoyers*.

Woman is at once the apple and the serpent.—*Heine*.

The people who wish to be loved outnumber those who are willing to love.—*Chamfort*.

SECTION III—LOVERS

MARIANNA ALCOFORADO TO THE CHEVALIER DE CHAMILLY

The nun Marianna Alcofarado has been described as "the Portuguese Heloise." Her letters, written in 1668, to the French nobleman who returned to his own people and left her after a passionate love-making have appeared in many editions and in several languages.

(1668.)

. . . . I am very unfortunate if you have not had a chance (of writing) since your departure, and still more so if you have, without writing to me. Your injustice and ingratitude are extreme, but I should be in despair if they drew upon you any ill, and I would much rather that they remained unpunished than that I should be avenged. I resist all the evidence that would persuade me that you love me very little, and I am much more inclined to abandon myself blindly to my passion than to regard the reasons you give me for complaining of your caring so little. How much anxiety you might have spared me, if you had been as negligent during the first days I saw you as you have seemed for some time past!

. . . . But who would not have been deceived like me by such ardour, and to whom would it not have seemed sincere? What pain it is to come to suspect for long the good faith of those we love!

. . . . You subjugated me by your assiduous attentions; you enflamed me by your transports; you charmed me by your kindnesses; you reassured me by your vows; my violent desire seduced me and the sequel to beginnings so

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pleasant and so happy is nothing but tears, but sighs, but a disastrous death, beyond my power to stay.

True, I had a quite unexpected happiness in loving you, but it is costing me strange sorrows! All the emotions you awaken in me are extreme.

If I had obstinately resisted your love; if I had given you any cause for disappointment and jealousy in order to enflame you more; if you had observed any artifice in my conduct; if in short I had sought to counter with my reason the natural inclination towards you which you quickly made me aware of (though my efforts would certainly have been vain), you could punish me severely and take advantage of your power. But you seemed lovable to me before ever you had said that you loved me; you revealed a great passion for me; I was ravished by it and abandoned myself to loving you helplessly.

You were not blind like me; why then have you suffered me to fall into my present condition? What did you intend doing with all my transports, which could not but be very importunate? You knew well that you would not always be in Portugal; why did you then choose me to make me so unhappy? You might, without doubt, have found in this country some beautiful woman with whom you could have had sufficient pleasure, since you sought only the gross kind; one who would have loved you faithfully for so long as you were in her sight; whom time would have consoled for your absence, and whom you could have left without perfidy and without cruelty. . . . I can well see that you are as easily turned against me as I should be in your favour. Without calling upon all my love and without thinking that I was doing anything extraordinary, I should have resisted reasons greater than any which could possibly oblige you to leave me.

They would have seemed feeble indeed to me, and there is none which could ever have torn me away from you; but you wished to profit by the pretexts which you found for returning to France. A vessel was leaving; could you not have let it go? Your family had written to you. Don't you know all the persecutions I have endured from mine?

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Your honour bound you to abandon me? Have I taken any care of mine? You were obliged to go and serve your king? If all that is said of him is true, he has not need of your aid, and he would have excused you. I should have been too happy if we had spent our lives together; but since a cruel absence must separate us, it seems to me that I ought to be glad that I was never untrue, and I would not have committed an act so base for all the world. However, you have known the uttermost depth of my heart and my tenderness, and you have been able to decide to leave me for ever and to expose me to the terrors that I must experience of being remembered by you no more than as a sacrifice to a new passion! I see quite well that I love you to madness; nevertheless I do not complain of the violence of the movements of my heart. I accustom myself to its persecutions and I could not go on living but for the pleasure I find and rejoice in, of loving you in the midst of a thousand griefs. But I am unceasingly persecuted by an extreme vexation through the hatred and disgust I have for all things. My family, my friends and this convent are insupportable to me. All that I am obliged to see, and all that I have necessarily to do is odious to me. I am so jealous for my passion that it seems as if all my actions and all my tasks have regard to you. . . . Everybody has perceived the complete change in my state of mind, in my behaviour, in my person. My mother spoke to me sharply and then with kindness. I do not know what I replied to her; I think I must have confessed all to her. The most severe of the nuns have pitied me in my present condition; it has even made them considerate and tender to me.

Everyone is touched by my love, and you remain in a profound indifference, without writing to me any but cold letters full of repetitions; the paper is not half filled, and it is grossly obvious that you are dying to get them finished.

Dona Brites the last few days has been worrying me to come out of my room, and thinking to divert me, she led me out on the balcony from which one can see Mertola. I followed her, and I was immediately struck by a cruel remembrance which made me cry for the

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rest of the day. She led me back, and I threw myself on my bed, and there gave myself up to a thousand reflections on the meagre prospect of my ever getting well again. . . . I often saw you pass there with an air which charmed me, and I was on that balcony the fatal day when I began to feel the first effects of my unhappy passion. It seemed to me that you wished to please me, though you did not know me; I persuaded myself that you had noticed me among all those who were with me. I imagined that when you stopped you were glad that I saw you better and admired your skill when you pressed your horse forward. I was alarmed when you made it pass over a difficult place; then I became secretly interested in all its actions. I felt sure that you were not indifferent to me, and I took all you did as being for me.

. . . I would content myself with seeing you from time to time and with knowing merely that you were in the same locality. But perhaps . . . you will be more affected by the rigour and severity of another than you have been by my favours. Is it possible that you will be enflamed by bad treatment? But before you get caught in a great passion, think well of the excess of my griefs, of the uncertainty of my plans, of the diversity of my impulses, of the extravagance of my letters, of my confidences, my despairs, my desires, my jealousy. Ah! You are going to make yourself unhappy; I conjure you to profit by the condition I am in, and at least what I suffer through you will not be all in vain. Five or six months ago you made a sad confession to me; you avowed with too good a faith that you had loved a lady of your own country. If she prevents your return, tell me of it without scruple so that I may languish no longer. Some remnant of hope still sustains me and I shall be so glad, if it is to have no fulfilment, to lose it at once, and to lose myself. Send me her portrait, with one of her letters, and write me all that she says. . . .

Good-bye. I dare not give you a thousand loving names, nor abandon myself without constraint to my impulses. I love you a thousand times more than my life and a thousand times more than I can think. . . . How dear you are to me, and how cruel! I cannot prevent myself still saying that.

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SOPHIE ARNOULD TO FRANCOIS-JOSEPH BELANGER

The writer, a beautiful and clever opera singer in Paris, was forty-nine at this time. She died in 1802, having been forced to retire from the Opéra, where she was the principal early interpreter of Gluck twenty years before, owing to ill health. She had many lovers. Belanger was a distinguished architect.

Du Paraclet—Sophie, this 27 February, 1793.

WELL! my beautiful angel, behold your Sophie back again in her little cottage. Are you quite aware, my love, that you treated me with more than a little indifference during my stay in Paris? To see me but once! Can it be because I went twice to find you? I am always like those good dogs which return under a blow, licking the hand of the master who has struck them. Ah! I have more than once been about to cry over it, but I said to myself: "Well, what are you doing, Sophie! poor Sophie! One can easily ignore one's stomach, but is it possible to do so with one's heart? Eh! I sadly took my solitary road again, *where consoling hope adorned for me the future*. Eh! how I am always singing, in thinking over all that happens to me, I found only that the air and words of poor Jacques: *When I beside thee was . . . etc., etc., etc.*, were marvellously appropriate to my situation, and it is nowadays the only air I permit myself. . . . Ah! poor baby . . . you remember: "All my days were fine. Who will restore to me that prosperous time"?

Ah, well, my baby, though I no longer count on your head, I warn you that I count and shall count eternally on your heart: consequently I beg you to give me this moment a proof of attention, of sincere friendship for your Sophie, in occupying yourself a little with her small interests. . . .

So long, my baby, my old and eternal friend. Never forget that there exists in a corner of this earth a being who has loved you tenderly, both in reason and to madness, and who will love you until the last sigh of her last moment. And that one, she is your Sophie!

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LUDMILLA ASSING TO PRINCE HERMANN VON PUCKLER-MUSKAU

Ludmilla Assing, a literary woman, incurred two years' imprisonment for disrespect to the King when the "Diaries" of her uncle, Varnhagen von Ense, edited by her, were published in Germany. She had gone to Italy, however, and although amnestied later, remained there until her death in 1880, at the age of fifty-three. She was a friend of Alexander von Humboldt, Bettina Brentano, and other personalities of her day. She died insane.

Florence, June 8th, 1862.

MY dear, most worthy Prince,—I received your letter yesterday and like everything that comes from you, it reveals your sincere, genuine friendship and your boundless kindness, which are a comfort and a source of happiness to me. And I thank you a thousand times. That much in your letter has been a source of pain to me, you will understand, and it is a veritable necessity of the heart that I should speak to you with the utmost candour, such as I am used to use towards you and as you have always permitted me. First let me express to you my regret and sympathy with regard to your illness, and my wish for your speedy recovery. Next I must express regret that the publication of the Diary has caused you annoyance. You will now have read the fourth part and I rely on your clear, unerring judgement. You will have discovered that the statement, which I learnt from you to my immense surprise, that the Queen's private life has suffered aspersion, through her name being coupled with that of Herr von Schleinitz in other than a political sense, is nothing but a calumny. You know me well enough, my dear Prince, to believe that I would have spared not only the Queen but any other woman in this connection. I have heard on good authority, although I am not very well acquainted with Court gossip in Berlin, that such a thing has been said of the Queen. Those, however, who read into such passages in the Diary unjustifiable meanings seem to me to be not only my enemies but also

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the Queen's. In what a corrupt, poisoned, state of society we live! Fancy such things being possible! But it is already doomed, and we who belong to the new movement can confidently visualise the dawn, which already shines with promise. I felt it to be my duty to join issue with the political views of the Queen. I am not personally acquainted with her and could not foresee that you, actuated by the best feelings, would represent me as devoted to her. I certainly am to the Princess Karl, to whom I shall always be grateful, and with pleasure I inserted references to her beauty and goodness of heart in the Diary. How willingly, to be sure, would I have let you see the whole manuscript, in order to have the benefit of your advice; but is it my fault that this was not the case? You told me you wished to withdraw from the world to some sequestered spot and for a long while wished to write no more letters. In fact, you left my own unanswered. I asked Maltitz and others where you were; but nobody could give me any idea. When we last met in Berlin and I told you of my intention to go to Italy, you replied that you also intended to go there and wished to spend some time in the Villa Luchesini at Florence, where you hoped to see me again, so I thought you had carried out this intention. Was I then, being so uncertain as to your movements, to send you the manuscript at Branitz? It was impossible. I did not wish to think myself quite forgotten by you; nevertheless, you were snatched away for the moment, apparently estranged from me. I really thought to see you in Florence and as soon as I arrived there, I enquired about you from the Prussian consul and my banker, but of course, in vain; as a last resource I left a note for you at the Post Office, but this also was futile. I wrote to you on the 2nd of November, supervised the printing of the 3rd and 4th parts at Rome, where I had all the proofs sent. Only after the work was finished did I go to Italy. There would have been ample time for any alterations to have been made as a result of your advice. You see, therefore, my dear Prince, there was no other course left for me than to arrange publication, not irresponsibly, but following the dictates of my conscience

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and sense of duty. If you will read my foreword, in which I have expressed my ideas on the subject, you will see that I have been solely actuated by my duty in obeying the will of my departed uncle, which enjoined me to act as I am doing in the interests of freedom and progress. Even though you have other views, you will understand, with that broadness of mind which characterizes you, that man, in his enthusiasm for an idea, freely gives his life and ignores all personal considerations, for the advancement of an idea. Such enthusiasm makes one invulnerable against the enemy. If, as I am assured in many quarters, my book with its flaming patriotism helps the new movement and promises to help perhaps even more efficaciously the future of the movement, which like a heavenly star shines in the distance, then it would, if he knew, be an immense satisfaction and joy for my uncle. It would form such a worthy memorial, this living effect on his people, so greater than any during his life, and I would find in that ample reward for any personal persecution that might fall to my lot; and for the realisation of his aims, should not his niece proudly and joyfully sacrifice everything? Oh my dear friend, in your heart you cannot be against me, even though you have adverse political opinions. Yet the gulf cannot be so great, for you, too, have always loved freedom, progress and humanity; you, too, are in advance of your time, as are all distinguished spirits who, hurrying in front, belong to the better future. The gods have not only granted you beauty of personal appearance to an unusual degree even for the later years of life, but also endowed you with a bold, youthful and genial spirit which has been preserved to participate joyfully in the triumph of new ideas.

So far as you personally are concerned, I can promise you faithfully to avoid all that could compromise you, either in connection with the Royal family to which you still appear to be attached, or with the People's party to which the future belongs. I have always borne this in mind and I hope you have found no indiscretions in this respect. That your friendship with me is taken amiss at Court, I regret with all my heart, indeed, there is no limit

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to what I would not do for love of you, and so I promise you that henceforth the Queen, so far as possible, will be immune from my attacks. I will tell you in confidence that the fifth book is already printed. I shall always remember with pleasure and gratitude that you had the great kindness to write to Herr Von Auerswald, on account of the unjustifiable refusal of the police to give me naturalisation papers. You told me, however, that this man, who had already been friendly to you, this time had not answered. As a matter of fact, it was only after some months delay and an almost threatening application that I made, to Count Schwerin, in which I set forth my legal rights in the matter, that he gave way.

Some days ago, I received news to the effect that so long after the book has been in the hands of the public, action was being taken against me by the authorities in Berlin. I must admit it would be very annoying if I had to answer the summons on the 4th August, in accordance with the instructions of my uncle to represent him in person. But fear nothing; my friends have dissuaded me from doing so and I am letting the thing take its course in my absence. I shall not be present for the prison edict which may possibly ensue, but shall await the sequel here in beautiful Italy or possibly in Switzerland. If you too are going South, perhaps I shall have the great joy of seeing you again somewhere. Continue to be sympathetic towards me; know, my dear Prince, that I reciprocate warmly every manifestation of your feelings, which give me great consolation.

You are surprised at my spirit in journeying here in Italy alone. I think I have less to fear from robbers than from civilisation. The courage needed for the latter is greater. In Italy I have met with nothing but kindness and affection, hospitality and friendship. On another occasion I will write to you in detail concerning my wonderful impressions of this heavenly journey and also of the state of Italy. I fear I have already tried your patience enough. I am staying another month in Florence and I beg you to gladden me again with a few lines to the same address.

With best wishes for your recovery and full of esteem,

Your Ludmilla.

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BETTINA BRENTANO TO PRINCE HERMANN VON PUCKLER-MUSKAU

i

Her infatuation was unrequited. She had written similar letters to Goethe in 1807, when only nineteen years of age. She became a woman of letters and a poetess. The Prince was a famous landscape gardener.

1833.

I ASK you most earnestly and humbly to return my letters. I shall not see you again, why should the only thing that causes you to regard me with antipathy remain in your hands?

You told me yesterday you did not know what passages (in a book) I had intended for you. Truly, none that was capable of misinterpretation. The friendly inclination which you show to a child coupled with the deep trust which through inviolable fidelity I had wished to win, were a necessity for me in such circumstances.

I have not made this journey to see you; I am not indiscreet, according to your letter I thought you far away. My sole inclination was to enjoy the park, which you call your heart, in silence and through its beautiful charm afford myself a spiritual stimulus in my work. I wanted just to live for myself but I admit that I hoped to give you pleasure thereby.

As I heard that you were here, I had already planned my departure. You invited me to come under your roof but it has turned out other than to your satisfaction nor have I derived much pleasure myself yet I am ready to take all the blame except in this matter, in which you impute it to me.

Whether we communicate directly in future or not, I hope the sincerity of my whole attitude and feelings up to now will never be impugned. My pride is so great that it is invulnerable, no disparaging opinion of me can discourage me. But I willingly admit that it will always be

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an honour for me to have felt so much at my ease within the bounds of intimacy, in which you called me with such good will.

The messenger will wait to know whether it is your pleasure to return my letters.

Loving and appreciating to the full all that which has by its beauty kept me in true allegiance to you,

I remain,

Your devoted Bettine.

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1833.

Yesterday at midday your gamekeeper came to me and brought in an unsealed, unaddressed and inadequately closed packet, my letters. I had a foreboding that I should be deeply hurt by them. I have read them through to-night and reading them has made me suffer, which you will in all probability not suspect. I am accustomed to draw the waters towards myself. Throughout the whole night I have fought down my claims on you and yet how this love astonishes and pleases me. Ah, Puckler, what a treasure in these buoyant veiled pages hast thou thrown at my feet, just like a dead tree its leaves. And what a thank-offering to your genius that it has given you all this through my agency.

When I estimate the impression these letters have made on me and take your own behaviour into consideration, I see that they are totally indifferent to you, as your manner of returning them testifies and as the unsympathetic, indifferent and heartless-and-soulless way in which you thus belittle the offering I have laid at your feet, amply shows. I was prepared for it, I have no claims on you.

I have willingly taken to heart all the bitter lessons you have taught me. I am now versed in renunciation. In these days you have scourged my soul and I have not even flinched. You have not seen from my laughing features what I felt.

In Berlin after I had for an entire year served you truly

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and whole heartedly, without the slightest reciprocity and you came for the first time, I leaned my head an instant on your shoulder and kissed your hands, ah, but it was so natural, the tired heart wished but to repose for a moment, but you thrust me gently back and went to the table and turned over the pages of a book, you looked at the clock, it was time to return. And then you were four weeks in Berlin and did not wish to see me. If I now no longer cared for or loved you, it would occasion surprise to none, but it is impossible for me not to love you and even for such love not to grow. Should I build on this outward relationship and only consider your blameworthy and erring nature? Then the task which your genius has allotted me were badly performed.

No, all the beautiful qualities, which in ecstatic contemplation of the truth and the inspiration of love I have perceived in you, will eternally speak for you, unaffected by falsity or slander. You are the lordly one, but fettered, like Richard Coeur de Lion, who deprived of his power and crown, could yet remain for the faithful Blondel the object of his love and fidelity.

You may tear me off, banish me, strike me blows in unconsciousness, mock, jeer, gibe at and despise me, yet I will gladly resign myself and my faith in your higher nature will not waver; no, I will not be a false prophet to you, do to me what you will; forbid me to write to you, to speak of you, yet will I follow you. But without your commands will I do nothing. I will find out to what unsuspected regions the spirit of love transports me: Columbus did not indeed make his great discovery without a thousand hardships and privations; no, it is not in vain that day and night I am continually obsessed by thought of thee.

To-day I shall take my leave of the Princess and you must tell me unequivocally that you desire me to go and that you have nothing further to say to me. I will as the time goes on never reproach myself for leaving you. The letters which you have sent me with such little care, as though they meant nothing to you, are not my property; they

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belong exclusively to you. I will not venture to use a line of them.

I could not spend to-night in bed. I wanted some other place than the damp, dark bedroom. I lay on the threshold in my dressing gown and on a pillow and gazed into the starry night.

Puckler, do not worry because of me. You think the soul can project itself out of the body and communicate with another soul, with which it is in harmony. And this has become a superstition with you. Yet you will have slept untroubled and not thought of me.

With my letters do what you will. All that I sought for amongst them I have not found, namely, a short letter from you to me, which I once sent to you with the request to return it and in which you had asked me to love you as I do now. You have not returned it, as though you repented having written it. If you do not require the letters any more, then give them to your brother, sealed or otherwise, for him to keep.

Bettine.

iii

25th Sept., 1833.

I have taken to heart your letter, which I received after my departure from the fateful park, it has cauterised the wound. I can always hold myself in check spiritually, even when the bitterest falls to my lot, the physical, effect, however is another matter. While I thought composedly over the more vital parts of your letter, my blood was ill at ease, in Vetschau (a town), where I experienced a fit of giddiness, it boiled over; I even spat blood, perhaps it was the blood which had flowed in my veins for you, for afterwards I felt relieved. In Lubbenau, I travelled through the Spree-forest and in the gentle autumn sunlight studied your letter: it seemed like a strange official document, giving the latest particulars of a lawsuit.

You call the letters I have sent you "madness, arising from pure intellectual excess, art serving as a vehicle for its expression," and you consider it "liable at any moment

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to be put aside or diverted to another objective." I have never done you any injury and fail to understand what prompts you to make such statements. Why with such horrible expressions do you belittle a relationship which had been the source of pleasure, honour and happiness? I mean my letters, whose elfin dance through a labyrinth of poetical and prophetic ecstasy of feeling was a harbinger of deepest truth. I am to blame; certainly, I had not suspected your idealistic nature lacked free will.

In the Spree-forest, I landed at the hunting-lodge and there prepared my lunch, the inmates were most friendly to me, the sun shed a beneficent warmth, the weary hounds lay resting around me. It was long since I had enjoyed such free, artless and unembarrassed society and now I must again acknowledge my blameworthiness; in Muskau, I ought not to have accepted your invitations and should have left earlier the society of people to whose enjoyment I contributed nothing essential. I was sorry that I disturbed what was perhaps your sole opportunity of conversation with the Princess, as she was with you but a short while. I ought at once to have realised that it was better to go.

The hounds brought with them a wonderful stag, which had just been shot. Someone fixed the great horns on the wall, I wrote underneath, "Who killed such a stag is no true huntsman."

In this connection there occurs to me a story. I was once out hunting with the Grand Duke of Weimar, who had made a bet that he would not fail to bring down the first wild animal he encountered. I was to be the witness. We reached the place of ambush, the courtly Duke cleared a place in the snow for me to stand and we lay in wait. After a while a stag of noble appearance came in sight. The Grand Duke levelled his rifle and I expected to hear the shot and see the animal fall but to my surprise his face became very grave, he lowered the weapon and laid his hand on his dog's head, remaining thus, motionless and solemn, while the magnificent creature passed unsuspecting by. I looked at him astonished and he said, "Who would not be filled with respect to see such a creature issue from

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the woods, whoever wounded a noble animal like this would be unworthy of the name of hunter. I at any rate have too much respect to injure such an animal."

On recalling this story, I was deeply moved at the thought of the Grand Duke's magnanimity and I resolved that I would emulate it and leave you unmolested and accommodate my wishes to yours, relinquishing your society and even our correspondence. Do not impute to me any spite or irritability in this, it is simply the conviction that you, unlike those great men, Goethe and the Grand Duke, cannot appreciate the trend of my spirit and feelings and that the misunderstandings which arise therefrom cannot be explained or remain unexplained without further misunderstanding arising.

In your letter you refer to the passionate friendship of a great lady. My relations with you were much more subdued and self-contained. I required no requital of my love, no gratitude, no attentions but only trust and understanding. No, Prince Muskau, I ask for no bouquets, with an abundance of violets and roses, if I were in a position where I might be made jealous, it would not be because the loved one had gathered from the woods the entire treasury of flowers and blossoms, forming a cornucopia of pine-apples, melons, orange blossoms and a myriad other ornaments of nature, and laid it at the feet of my rival, no, I would only envy in such circumstance her to whom my lover tendered a single flower in shy adoration and whose heart and soul met his in secret solitude.

You have been good towards me, that I feel now to be so, when to my shame I have learnt that your peculiar sensibility has been wounded through me. When you come to Berlin do not visit me, it will not be difficult for you not to do so and I do not wish my soothed feelings to be roused again. All that I intended for you, you will receive in another way.

And here I venture to inform you of a secret plan, those sweet pages (the letters) were the entrance to a deep discussion of bigger relationships and truths, I wanted to come to an understanding with you, whereby language became

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sublimated, making comprehensible the obscurest, the boldest thoughts. I wanted to discuss with you what no-one else could. I believed great secrets between us would be explained and thus to your thirsty heart a refreshing draught would be proffered, to your inmost impulse, an objective would be revealed, and I wished you to assimilate these pages through understanding, by rejecting the unfavourable and even communicating knowledge. Thus it would emerge as a work in which human nature as a whole and its soul would be depicted in individual form and to this work you would give to the world under the title "I and my good Genius."

I feel sure you will not misconstrue this bold and beautiful intention.

The anecdotes I promised you shall have in due course I will include everything concerning my acquaintance with the Grand Duke; that will perhaps cause you to think differently about me, and the deep and great things, which I have received as a result of my meditations on you will not be lost to you.

Bettine.

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GEORGE SAND TO ALFRED DE MUSSET

That sentimental volcano of a novelist, Madame Dudevant, felt perhaps more deeply for the poet de Musset than for any other of her numerous lovers except the composer Chopin. She was thirty in 1834. De Musset was twenty-four.

i

15-17 April, 1834.

. . . .

Never, never believe, Alfred, that I could be happy if I thought I had lost your heart. Whether I have been mistress or mother to you, what does that matter? Whether I have inspired you by love or by friendship, whether I have been happy or unhappy with you—nothing of this affects the present state of my mind. I know that I love you, that is all. . . . To watch over you, to keep you from all harm, from all friction; to surround you with distractions and pleasures, that is the need which awakens regret in me since I lost you. Why has a task so sweet, a task which I should have undertaken so joyfully, become little by little so bitter, and then suddenly impossible? What fate has intervened to turn my remedies into poisons? How is it that I, who would have given all my vitality to give you a night's repose and peace, have become a torment, a scourge, a spectre to you? When these atrocious memories besiege me (and at what hour do they leave me in peace?), I go nearly mad, I soak my pillow with tears; I hear in the silence of the night your voice calling me. Who will call me now? Who will need me to keep watch? How am I to use up the strength which I had accumulated for you and which now turns against me? Oh, my child, my child! How much I need your tenderness and your forgiveness! Never ask me for mine, and never say you have wronged me: how did I know? I remember nothing except that we have been very unhappy and have parted; but I know, I feel, that all our lives we shall love one another from our heart, from our intelligence, and that we shall by a holy

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affection try to cure ourselves mutually of the ills that we have each suffered for the other.

Alas, no! we were not to blame; we obeyed our destiny, for our natures, more impulsive than others', prevented us living the life of ordinary lovers; but we were born to know and to love each other, be sure of that. Had it not been for your youth and the weakness which your tears produced in me one morning, we should have remained brother and sister. . . .

You were right, our embraces were an incest, but we knew it not; we threw ourselves innocently and sincerely into each other's arms. Well now, have those embraces left us a single remembrance which is not chaste and holy? On a day of fever and delirium you reproached me with never having made you feel the pleasures of love. I shed tears at that, but now I am well content that there should have been something true in that speech. I am well content that those pleasures have been more austere, more veiled than any you will find elsewhere. At least you, in the arms of other women, will not be reminded of me. But when you are alone, when you feel the need to pray and to shed tears, you will think of your George, of your true comrade, of your sick-nurse, of your friend, of something better than that. For the sentiment which unites us is combined of so many things, that it can compare to none other. The world will never understand it at all; so much the better. We love each other and we can snap our fingers at it.

Good-bye, good-bye, my dearest little one. Write me very often, I beg of you. Oh that I knew you arrived safe and sound in Paris! Remember that you have promised to take care of yourself. Good-bye, my Alfred, love your George. Send me, I beg, twelve pairs of glacé gloves, six yellow and six of colour. Send me, above all, the verses you have made. All, I have not a single one!

ii

Venice, 12 May 1834.

No, my sweet darling, those three letters are not the last hand-clasp of the lover who is quitting you; they are the

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embrace of the brother who remains to you. This feeling is too beautiful, too pure and too sweet for me ever to want to have done with it. Are you certain, you, my sweet, of never being forced to shatter it? A new love, will it not impress this on you as a condition? May the remembrance of me not poison one of the joys of your life; but do not let those joys destroy and despise the remembrance of me. Be happy, be beloved. How should you not be so? But keep me in a little corner of your heart and go there in your sad days to find a consolation or an encouragement. You do not speak of your health. Nevertheless you tell me that the spring air and the odour of lilac enter your room in gusts and make your heart leap with love and youth. That is a sign of health and strength, certainly the sweetest that nature vouchsafes us. Love then, my Alfred, love all good things. Love a young woman, beautiful and who has not yet loved and not yet suffered. Make the most of her, and do not cause her suffering. A woman's heart is a thing so delicate when it is not an icicle or a stone! I hardly think there is any mean, and neither is there in your manner of loving and of esteeming. It is in vain that you seek to entrench yourself behind mistrust or think to take shelter in the carelessness of childhood. Your soul is made for loving ardently or for completely wasting away. I cannot believe that with so much vigour and youthfulness you can fall into the "august permanence." Every instant you would come out of it, and you would transfer to unworthy objects in spite of yourself the rich effusion of your love. You have said it a hundred times, and you have recanted it in vain—nothing has cancelled that sentence:—There is nothing in the world but love which is anything at all. Perhaps it is a divine faculty which is lost and found again, that one must cultivate or else buy with cruel suffering, painful experiences. Perhaps you have loved me with grief in order to love another with abandon. Perhaps she who is coming will love you less than I, and perhaps she will be happier and more beloved. There are such mysteries in these things, and God pushes us along paths so new and unforeseen! Let it happen; do not resist him. He does not forsake his

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

privileged ones. He takes them by the hand and puts them in the midst of dangers, where they must learn to live so that they may afterwards sit at the banquet where they are to repose. As for me, darling, see, my soul grows calm and hope comes to me. My imagination dies and attaches itself henceforth only to literary fictions. It abandons its part in real life and no longer draws me after it beyond prudence and reason. My heart remains and will always remain sensitive and irritable, ready to bleed copiously at the least pin scratch. That sensibility has yet still something forced and morbid about it that will not be cured in a day. . . .

For the first time in my life I love without passion.

You have not yet arrived at this yourself. Perhaps you are going in the opposite direction. Perhaps your last love-affair will be the most romantic and the most youthful. But your kind heart, your kind heart—do not kill it, I pray you. May it be wholly or in part in all the love-affairs of your life, but fill in them always its noble role, so that one day you may be able to look back and say like me: I have suffered often, I have deceived myself sometimes, but I have loved. It is I who have lived and not a fictive being created by my pride and my ennui. I have attempted this role during moments of solitude and of disgust, but it was to console myself for being alone, and when I was with another, I abandoned myself like a child, I became silly and simple again such as love would have us be.

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MADAME NICCOBONI TO MONSIEUR DE MAILLEBOIS

She was the wife of a civil servant. He was a distinguished General under Richelieu, and served much abroad, especially in Spain and Germany. At the Revolution he was disgraced as a reactionary.

[1755.]

I GOT up early to-day to enjoy my liberty. Everybody has left for Canterbury; I am alone, mistress of my house. You would have laughed to see me. For once Miss Betzi could say that I had the air of a princess of romance. Your portrait is on my table; your letters all scattered in my breast, on my knees; the drawer turned up-side-down, the portfolio open; I contemplate all my riches. I bless the inventor of an art which excels all others, not because it conveys to us the actions of heroes, the history of the world, the causes of everything, that it satisfies the insatiable desire of learning and the vain curiosity of men; but because it enables me to read in your heart in spite of the distance separating us. How much does love owe to that happy discovery! What a treasure for it are these letters, solace of one heart, and delight of another! One is pleased writing them; and one enjoys the pleasure that is felt, and that which one can procure for another. Perhaps I make too much of the idea which you gave me, that you have no other amusement than my letters. I write badly, I cannot dream what it is I want to say; my pen, limited, cannot keep up with my fancy. My style is sometimes tender; it is now playful, now serious, even sad, often tedious, always true: but my dear Alfred is indulgent, he says that I write well: ah! very well, without a doubt, if I please him! I do not dare to think that I shall see you again for certain: that is an emotion so vivid, when I think of it! oh! I lose my head; truly I lose it! What! you will be there, my lifted eyes will encounter yours, I shall make not a single movement unnoted by you! I shall hear that sweet, harmonious voice, say to me: "What do you want?"

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What do you desire?" My Alfred, if you knew; I cannot write any more, my heart agitated, hurried. . . . Ah! Come again, come again then! My God, how you are loved! If there is a sentiment more powerful than love, than what the vulgar call *love*, I have it for you. To love, to adore—feeble expressions which render not at all the transports of a passion so tender. Ah! if you were there! if you were just there, my dear Alfred, my dear, my adorable lover! I think . . . yes, I think I should find a way of convincing you that no one ever loved more ardently than I!

LOVERS

NELL GWYNNE TO LAWRENCE HYDE

Lord Burford and Lord Beauclaire were Nell Gwynne's sons. Harris was a great Shakespearean actor. Mrs. Knight was a rival of Nell Gwynne's at the Court of Charles II. Hyde, afterwards Earl of Rochester, was probably at the Hague on a diplomatic mission at the time of this letter.

(Circa 1678.)

PRAY Deare Mr. Hide forgive me for not writing to you before now for the reasone is I have bin sick thre months and sinse I recovered I have had nothing to intertaine you withall nor have nothing now worth writing but that I can holde no longer to let you know I never have ben in any companie wethout drinking your health for I love you with all my soule. The Pel Mel is now to me a dismale plase sinse I have uterly lost Sr Car Scupe never to be recovrd agane. Mrs. Knights Lady mothers dead & she has put up a scutchin no beiger then my Lady Grins scuchins. My lord Rochester is gone in the cuntrie. My. Savil has got a misfortune, but is upon recovery & is to marry an hairres, who I thinke wont have an ill time on't if he holds up his thumb. My lord of Dorscit apiers wonse in thee munths, for he drinkes aile with Shadwell and Mr. Haris at the Dukes house all day long. My Lord Burford remimbers his sarvis to you. My Lord Bauclaire is goeing into france. we are a goeing to supe with the king at Whithall and my lady Harvie. The king remembers his sarvis to you. now lets talke of state affairs, for we never varied things so cunningly as now for we dont know whether we shall have peace or war, but I am for war and for no other reason but that you may come home. I have a thousand merry conseets, but I canr make her write um & therefore you must take the will for the deed. good bye. your most loveing obedunt faithfull humbel

Sarvant

E. G.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

THE MARQUISE DU CHATELET TO THE MARQUIS DE SAINT-LAMBERT

The Marquise was suffering the consequences of taking too seriously one of those love-affairs which were a pastime of the salons in the reign of Louis XVI. And the Marquis was a poet—in porcelain.

i

(May 1748.)

ALL my distrust of your character, all my resolutions against love have not served to preserve me from that you have inspired. I no longer seek to combat it; I feel the uselessness of doing so. The time I passed with you at Nancy has increased it to a degree at which I am myself astonished; but far from reproving myself on account of it, I feel an extreme pleasure in loving you, and it is this only which can sweeten your absence. I am quite satisfied with you when we are alone together, but not with the effect on you of my departure. You have quick appetities, but you do not yet know love. I am sure that you will be to-day gayer and more witty than ever at Luneville, and this thought afflicts me apart from all anxiety. If you are only to love me feebly, if your heart is not capable of giving itself without reserve, to be entirely occupied with me, to love me beyond all bounds and all measure, what will you do with mine? All these reflections torment me, but they occupy me unceasingly, and I think only of you while wishing only to occupy my mind with reasons which must prevent me thinking of you. You will write to me, without doubt, but you will take it upon yourself to write to me. You wish that I should be less exigent; I receive four lines from you, and these four lines will have been an effort to you. I am much afraid that your mind makes no more ado about a subtle mockery than your heart about a tender sentiment; indeed I am much afraid that I am doing wrong to love you too much. I know quite well that I am contradicting myself, and it is here that my liking for you is a reproach to me; but my reflections, my conflicts, all that

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I feel, all that I think, show me that I love you more than I should. Come to Cirey to show me that I am wrong. It is only when I do not see you that I feel you can be in the wrong.

This letter is very inconsequent, and proves only too well the disturbance you have left in my soul, which it is too late now to calm. I await your first letter with an impatience which perhaps it will not in the least assuage. I am much afraid I shall be still waiting after I have received it. . . .

Without that proof of love which you have so reproached me for urging, I shall not believe that you love me. I attach many more ideas to this word than you do; I am much afraid that while saying the same things we do not understand one another. However, when I think of your conduct with me at Nancy, of all that you sacrificed for me, of all the love that you showed for me, I find it unjust in me to tell you any other thing than that I love you. This sentiment effaces all the others.

ii

(August 1749.)

Heavens, how every thing at home vexes me when you are gone! How many things has my heart to tell you! You treated me cruelly, you did not look once at me. I know of course that I ought still to be thanking you for it, that it was decency, discretion, but I did not the less feel the privation; I am used to reading in your yearning eyes every instant of my life that you are occupied with me, that you love me; I seek them everywhere, and assuredly I find nothing resembling them anywhere; mine have nothing more to look at. I am filled with extreme impatience to know if you will mount the guard tomorrow? . . . Remember if you mount the guard tomorrow, I shall be able to see you again on Monday, remember that one day is everything to me; and I do not need, in order to be able to feel that, my ridiculous fears, for I condemn them. But a day passed with you is worth an eternity without you.

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I shall do all I can not to be moody this evening; but how shall I be able to prevent them seeing the anxiety and malaise of my soul, for that is the word which expressed my condition. Do not judge me by what I have been; I did not want to love you so excessively; but now that I know you better I feel that I can never love you enough. If you do not love me less, if my mistakes have not weakened this charming love, without which I could not live, I am sure that there is nobody in existence as happy as I am, but I confess to you that I fear. Reassure me, my heart needs it; the least weakening of our sentiments would tear me with remorse. I thought,—that was my own fault—that in Paris you would always be the same. Remember that my love, that the grief you caused me in wanting to leave me and the fear of those grenadiers, have punished me enough. I love you with an ardour certain to make you happy if you are able to love me still as you have loved me. I found nothing better to send you than the casket in which you enclosed my letters. Send me them back, I ask you on my knees, happiness of my life.

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MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT TO CAPTAIN GILBERT IMLAY

Mary Wollstonecraft eventually married the philosophical William Godwin, after an unsuccessful attempt to drown herself in the Thames, following on the depression caused by Captain Imlay's desertion. Her childhood was unhappy, her father being a drunkard, and while still in her teens she became a governess. During the "Terror" she lived in Paris and wrote an account of the Revolution, but her chief work was the "Vindication of the Rights of Women." She died after giving birth to Mary Godwin, who eloped with Shelley and later became his wife.

i

(Paris, August 1793.)

Past twelve o'clock, Monday night.

I OBEY an emotion of my heart, which made me think of wishing thee, my love, good-night! before I go to rest, with more tenderness than I can to-morrow, when writing a hasty line or two under Colonel ——'s eye. You can scarcely imagine with what pleasure I anticipate the day when we are to begin almost to live together; and you, you smile to hear how many plans of enjoyment I have in my head, now that I am confident my heart has found peace in your bosom.

Cherish me with that dignified tenderness which I have only found in you; and your own dear girl will try to keep under a quickness of feeling that has sometimes given you pain. Yes, I will be *good* that I may deserve to be happy, and whilst you love me I cannot again fall into the miserable state which rendered life a burthen almost too heavy to be borne.

But good-night! God bless you! Sterne says that it is equal to a kiss. Yet, I would rather give you the kiss into the bargain, glowing with gratitude to Heaven, and affection to you. I like the word affection, because it signifies

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something habitual; and we are soon to meet, to try whether we have mind enough to keep our own hearts warm.

ii

(The absent lover.)

Paris, 1793, Friday morning.

I am glad to find that other people can be unreasonable as well as myself; for be it known to thee that I answered thy *first* letter the very night it reached me (Sunday), though thou couldst not receive it before Wednesday, because it was not sent off till the next day. There is a full, true, and particular account.

Yet I am not angry with thee, my love, for I think that it is a proof of stupidity, and likewise of a milk-and-water affection, which comes to the same thing, when the temper is governed by a square and compass. There is nothing picturesque in this straight-lined equality, and the passions always give grace to the actions.

Recollection now makes my heart bound to thee; but it is not to thy money-getting face, though I cannot be seriously displeased with the exertion which increases my esteem, or rather is what I should have expected from thy character. No; I have thy honest countenance before me—relaxed by tenderness; a little, little wounded by my whims; and thy eyes glittering with sympathy. Thy lips then feel softer than soft, and I rest my cheek on thine, forgetting all the world. I have not left the hue of love out of the picture—the rosy glow; and fancy has spread it over my cheeks, I believe, for I feel them burning, whilst a delicious tear trembles in my eye that would be all your own, if a grateful emotion directed to the Father of nature, who has made me thus alive to happiness, did not give more warmth to the sentiment it divides. I must pause a moment.

Need I tell you that I am tranquil after writing this? I do not know why, but I have more confidence in your affection, when absent, than present; nay, I think that you must love me, for, in the sincerity of my heart let me say

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it, I believe I deserve your tenderness, because I am true,
and have a degree of sensibility that you can see and relish.

Yours sincerely,
Mary.

iii

(On affection and friendship.)

Tonsberg, Norway, 1795.

. . . . I rose early to pursue my journey to Tonsberg. . . . Tonsberg was something like a home, yet I was to enter without lighting up pleasure in any eye. I dreaded the solitariness of my apartment, and wished for night to hide the starting tears, or to shed them on my pillow, and close my eyes on a world where I was destined to wander alone. Why has nature so many charms for me, calling forth and cherishing refined sentiments, only to wound the breast that fosters them? How illusive, perhaps, the most so, are the plans of happiness founded on virtue and principle; what inlets of misery do they not open in a half-civilised society? The satisfaction arising from conscious rectitude will not calm an injured heart, when tenderness is ever finding excuses; and self-applause is a cold, solitary feeling, that cannot supply the place of disappointed affection, without throwing a gloom over every prospect. . . .

I cannot write composedly—I am every instant sinking into reveries—my heart flutters, I know not why. Fool! It is time thou wert at rest.

Friendship and domestic happiness are continually praised; yet how little is there of either in the world, because it requires more cultivation of mind to keep awake affection, even in our own hearts, than the common run of people suppose. Besides, few like to be seen as they really are; and a degree of simplicity, and of undisguised confidence, which to uninterested observers would almost border on weakness, is the charm, nay, the essence of love and friendship; all the bewitching graces of childhood again appearing. As objects merely to exercise my taste I therefore like to see people together who have an affection for

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each other; every turn of their features touches me, and remains pictured on my imagination in indelible characters . . . Friendship is in general sincere at the commencement, and lasts whilst there is anything to support it; but as a mixture of novelty and vanity is the usual prop, no wonder if it fall with the slender stay. The fop in the play payed a greater compliment than he was aware of when he said to a person whom he meant to flatter, "I like you almost as well as a *new acquaintance*." Why am I talking of friendship, after which I have had such a wild-goose chase? I thought only of telling you that the crows, as well as wild geese, are here birds of passage.

iv

(London, November 1795.)

I write you now on my knees; imploring you to send my child and the maid with —, to Paris, to be consigned to the care of Madame —, Rue —, Section de —. Should they be removed, — can give their direction.

Let the maid have all my clothes without distinction.

Pay the cook her wages, and do not mention the confession which I forced from her; a little sooner or later is of no consequence. Nothing but my extreme stupidity could have rendered me blind so long. Yet, whilst you assured me that you had no attachment, I thought we might still have lived together.

I shall make no comments on your conduct, or any appeal to the world. Let my wrongs sleep with me! Soon, very soon, I shall be at peace. When you receive this, my burning head will be cold.

I would encounter a thousand deaths, rather than a night like the last. Your treatment has thrown my mind into a state of chaos, yet I am serene. I go to find comfort, and my only fear is, that my poor body will be insulted by an endeavour to recall my hated existence. But I shall plunge into the Thames where there is least chance of my being snatched from the death I seek.

God bless you: May you never know by experience what

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you have made me endure. Should your sensibility ever awake, remorse will find its way to your heart; and, in the midst of business and sensual pleasure, I shall appear before you, the victim of your deviation from rectitude.

v

London, November 1795.

Sunday Morning.

I have only to lament that, when the bitterness of death was past, I was inhumanly brought back to life and misery. But a fixed determination is not to be baffled by disappointment; nor will I allow that to be a frantic attempt which was one of the calmest acts of reason.

In this respect I am only accountable to myself. Did I care for what is termed reputation, it is by other circumstances that I should be dishonoured.

You say, "that you know not how to extricate ourselves out of the wretchedness in which we have been plunged." You are extricated long since. But I forbear to comment. If I am condemned to live longer, it is a living death.

It appears to me that you lay much more stress on delicacy than on principle, for I am unable to discover what sentiment of delicacy would have been violated by your visiting a wretched friend, if indeed you have any friendship for me.

But, since your new attachment is the only sacred thing in your eyes, I am silent. Be happy! my complaints shall never more damp your enjoyment; perhaps I am mistaken in supposing that even my death could, for more than a moment. This is what you call magnanimity. It is happy for yourself, that you possess this quality in the highest degree.

Your continually asserting that you will do all in your power to contribute to my comfort when you only allude to pecuniary assistance, appears to me a flagrant breach of delicacy. I want not such vulgar comfort, nor will I accept it.

I never wanted but your heart. That gone, you have no-

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thing more to give. Had I only poverty to fear, I should not shrink from life. Forgive me then, if I say, that I shall consider any direct or indirect attempt to supply my necessities, as an insult which I have not merited, and as rather done out of tenderness for your own reputation, than for me. Do not mistake me; I do not think that you value money, therefore I will not accept what you do not care for, though I do much less, because certain privations are not painful to me.

When I am dead, respect for yourself will make you take care of the child. I write with difficulty—probably I shall never write to you again. Adieu. God bless you.

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MARY GODWIN TO P. B. SHELLEY

Three days after the following letter was written, Harriet, Shelley's separated wife, ended her pitiful career by drowning herself in the Serpentine. Mary, with whom Shelley had eloped more than two years before, had the virtue and beauty of mind which the unfortunate Harriet lacked. The "Boy" she refers to was the baby William, who died of fever in Italy, in 1819, her third child by Shelley to die. Mary was only nineteen at the time of writing the following.

i

New Bond Street, Bath,
6th December 1816.

SWEET ELF,—I was awakened this morning by my pretty babe, and was dressed time enough to take my lesson from Mr. West, and (thank God) finished that tedious ugly picture I have been so long about. I have also finished the fourth chapter of *Frankenstein*, which is a very long one, and I think you would like it. And where are you? and what are you doing? my blessed love. I hope and trust that, for my sake, you did not go outside this wretched day. . . And what did my love think as he rode along—did he think about our home, our babe, and his poor Pecksie? But I am sure you did, and thought of them all with joy and hope. But in the choice of a residence, dear Shelley, pray be not too quick or attach yourself too much to one spot. Ah! were you indeed a winged Elf, and could soar over mountains and seas, and could pounce on the little spot. A house with a lawn, a river or lake, noble trees, and divine mountains to retire to. But never mind this; give me a garden, and *absentia* Claire, and I will thank my love for many favours. If you go, my love, to London, you will perhaps try to procure a good Livy, for I wish very much to read it. I must be more industrious, especially in learning Latin, which I neglected shamefully last summer at intervals, and those periods of not reading at all put me back very far. . . .

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

The blue eyes of your sweet Boy are staring at me while I write this; he is a dear child, and you love him tenderly, although I fancy that your affection will increase when he has a nursery to himself, and only comes to you just dressed and in good humour; besides when that comes to pass he will be a wise little man, for he improves in mind rapidly. Tell me, shall you be happy to have another little squaller? You will look grave on this, but I do not mean anything.

Leigh Hunt has not written. I would advise a letter addressed to him at the *Examiner* Office, if there is no answer to-morrow. He may not be at the Vale of Health, for it is odd that he does not acknowledge the receipt of so large a sum. There have been no letters of any kind to-day.

Now, my dear, when shall I see you? Do not be very long away; take care of yourself and take a house. I have a great fear that bad weather will set in. My airy Elf, how unlucky you are! . . . Adieu, sweetest love; love me tenderly, and think of me with affection when anything pleases you greatly.

Your affectionate girl,
Mary.

ii

The previous letter was written while Shelley was looking for a house in Marlow, and running up to London in connection with his inheritance, after the death of his grandfather. The following was written just after the news of Harriet's suicide. The Shelleys had not yet recovered from the shock of the suicide a few months earlier, of Fanny Godwin, Mary's sister. Shelley was now endeavouring to obtain the custody of Harriet's children. "The event you allude to" is the legal marriage of Mary and Shelley.

Bath, 17th December 1816.

My Beloved Friend,

I waited with the greatest anxiety for your letter. You are well, and that assurance has restored some peace to me. How very happy shall I be to possess those darling

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treasures that are yours. I do not exactly understand what Chancery has to in this, and wait with impatience for to-morrow, when I shall hear whether they are with you; and then what will you do with them? My heart says, bring them instantly here; but I submit to your prudence. You do not mention Godwin. When I receive your letter to-morrow I shall write to Mrs. Godwin. I hope, yet I fear, that he will show on this occasion some disinterestedness. Poor, dear Fanny, if she had lived until this moment she would have been saved, for my house would then have been a proper asylum for her. Ah! my best love, to you do I owe every joy, every perfection that I may enjoy or boast of. Love me, sweet, for ever. I hardly know what I mean, I am so much agitated. Clare has a very bad cough, but I think she is better to-day. Mr. Carn talks of bleeding if she does not recover quickly, but she is positively resolved not to submit to that. She sends her love. My sweet love, deliver some message from me to your kind friends at Hampstead; tell Mrs. Hunt that I am extremely obliged to her for the little profile she was so kind as to send me, and thank Mr. Hunt for his friendly message which I did not hear.

These Westbrooks!* But they have nothing to do with your sweet babes; they are yours, and I do not see the pretence for a suit; but to-morrow I shall know all.

Your box arrived to-day. I shall send soon to the upholsterer, for now I long more than ever that our house should be quickly ready for the reception of those dear children whom I love so tenderly. Then there will be a sweet brother and sister for my William, who will lose his pre-eminence as eldest, and be helped third at table, as Clare† is continually reminding him.

Come down to me, sweetest, as soon as you can, for I long to see you and embrace.

As to the event you allude to, be governed by your friends and prudence as to when it ought to take place, but it must be in London. . . .

* Harriet's relatives.

† Her half-sister, daughter of Godwin's second wife.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

You tell me to write a long letter, and I would, but that my ideas wander and my hand trembles. Come back to reassure me, my Shelley, and bring with you your darling Ianthe and Charles. Thank your kind friends. I long to hear about Godwin.

Your affectionate,
Mary.

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JANE CLAIRMONT TO BYRON

Clare, Clara, Claire, or Jane, was Mary Shelley's half-sister, daughter of the second Mrs. Godwin. She was an impulsive creature, and had a child, named Allegra, by Byron. She was arduously befriended and sheltered by the Shelleys.

(1815.)

YOU bid me write short to you and I have much to say. You also bade me believe that it was a fancy which made me cherish an attachment for you. It cannot be a fancy since you have been for the last year the object upon which every solitary moment led me to muse.

I do not expect you to love me, I am not worthy of your love. I feel you are superior, yet much to my surprise, more to my happiness, you betrayed passions I had believed no longer alive in your bosom. Shall I also have to ruefully experience the want of happiness? shall I reject it when it is offered? I may appear to you imprudent, vicious; my opinions detestable, my theory depraved; but one thing, at least, time shall show you that I love gently and with affection, that I am incapable of anything approaching to the feeling of revenge or malice; I do assure you, your future will shall be mine, and everything you shall do or say, I shall not question.

Have you then any objection to the following plan? On Thursday Evening we may go out of town together by some stage or mail about the distance of ten or twelve miles. There we shall be free and unknown; we can return early the following morning. I have arranged every thing here so that the slightest suspicion may not be excited. Pray do so with your people.

Will you admit me for two moments to settle with you where? Indeed I will not stay an instant after you tell me to go. Only so much may be said and done in a short time by an interview which writing cannot effect. Do what you will, or go where you will, refuse to see me and behave unkindly, I shall never forget you. I shall ever remember

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

the gentleness of your manners and the wild originality of your countenance. Having been once seen, you are not to be forgotten. Perhaps this is the last time I shall ever address you. Once more, then, let me assure you that I am not ungrateful. In all things have you acted most honourably, and I am only provoked that the awkwardness of my manner and something like timidity has hitherto prevented my expressing it to you personally.

Clara Clairmont.

Will you admit me now as I wait in Hamilton Place for your answer?

LOVERS

HENRIETTA VERNON, LADY GROSVENOR, TO H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND

The discovery of the intrigue between Lady Grosvenor and the Duke, who was a notorious libertine, resulted in an action by Lord Grosvenor for criminal conversation, by which he was awarded damages amounting to £10,000. It was the first time a royal prince had appeared as a defendant in court. Lord Grosvenor's own conduct made it hopeless for him to attempt to obtain a divorce. After the action, the Duke promptly deserted Lady Grosvenor for the wife of a wealthy timber merchant.

i

Sunday the 18th.

MY Dearest Friend,— . . . he appears rather in better temper to-day so I am in great hopes he did not get enough of the letter to make out much he stayed out very late last night which seems to have occasioned a *weezing* today, by the means of my sisters I think I can send and receive my letters very safe for the future.

Carry* is out of town for a few days so in the meantime I send them by another sister who comes to see me every day and she thinks it some business I have with Reda† about some Millenary that I dont chuse he should know of so if she gets ever a letter for me she knows she is not to take it out of her pocket till we are alone so its all cleverly settled again at present, how miserable I should have been if we could not have contrived to hear from one another, I just live only upon the thoughts of its not being a great while before I have the happiness of a letter from you, I'm very sure you'l write as soon as you can, I know your tenderness for me well enough to be certain of that,— he is coming upstairs I find so I shall conclude till tomorrow, God bless you my Dear Dear Friend.

* Caroline Vernon, a maid of honour at St. James.

†Mrs. Reda, a milliner, living opposite St. Alban's Street, Pall Mall.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

ii

Monday the 19th.

I resume my Pen to tell you to day how sincerely I esteem you, he is still rather more come about again to-day yesterday he shook hands with me, and this morning he came and kissed me . . . he may take what measures he pleases with me if you will but love me, I'd a note from Mrs. Reda this evening she sais she is certain he dares not say a word to her but she wishes he would above all things for that she knows very well how to answer him for that she knows enough of his Intrigues for him to be afraid of saying anything to her, and she is sure he is not *assez Hardi* to say a word to her upon the subject. . . I think I've laid a good scheme, for I've already complained I've got a pain in my side & I intend to say its much worse at the end of the month & and that I can't bear the motion of a carriage it will I really believe be a very good plan, for if I had said I had a Feaver or anything of that kind, a physician wd know by my Pulse I had not and might discover me to him & besides this will be a more lasting complaint so at the end of Five or Six Weeks I'll grow very ill and send for Fordyce the apothecary and make him send me a quantity of nasty draughts which I'll throw out of the window only think how wicked I am for in reality I'm already as strong and as well as ever I was in my Life . . . so I'll take it at the longest and not be well at the end of it, that we maint lye together & and he must be going to Newmarket the 8th or 9th for the Races which are the Tenth and he'll stay there some days and when he comes home he shall find me worse with the pain in my side, and your six weeks will be out the 26th and I hope you'll not be long after that I'm quite in sperrits with the thoughts that by some means or other we shall make out the time that I shall be so happy as to see you when you return, my Dear Soul adieu till tomorrow when I shall add more continue to love me pray.

LOVERS

iii

Tuesday Evening, the 20th.

I'm going to teize my Dear little Friend with more of my stupid letter I've not seen Mr. Croper since yesterday Morning he did not come home from his Brothers till I was assleep last night. . . . I cannot think what the Duce he is about,—I suppose by his not coming up to see me Mr. Gro——r has cursur'd out part of the Letter. . . .

O my dearest Soul I've just received Two the dearest letters in the World from you, how can I, I cannot express my feelings of gratitude & Love for you, your dear heart is so safe with *me* and feels every motion mine does, with you, how happy your dearest letters make me I'm so much obliged to you for saying you will take care of your dear Health because I desire you, do my dearest Friend I intreat you, & I'll do the same, how sweet those verses are you sent me they are heavenly sweet because they were marked by you I always liked Prior but shall adore him because you like him. I'm made quite happy to night by having fresh assurances of yr love, you have mine intirely how happy will that day be to me that brings you back I wonder where I shall see you first I form a thousand happy ideas to myself I shall be unable to speak from Joy, in the meantime let us write as often as possible.

How kind it was of you to say you had letters of consequence to write when it was only to poor me, Your dear little heart is flurried too on reading ye dear letters it has both laught and cry'd with Joy, it lies warm on my breast I cherish it and think of nothing else but to preserve it safe there and happy.

My dearest Soul I send you Ten Thousand kisses I wish I could give them. . . .

God bless you I will now conclude for I'm sure this letter is stupid enough to tire you to death pray forgive it I'm finishing it in the dark, I see nobody to tell me anything to make my letter entertaining, so can only tell you how sincerely I do and ever shall love you, & I know you'll like that as well as anything for nothing makes me so happy

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

as your telling me so & we love too well not to live by sympathy.

Amons tout Jour Tendrement mon adorable ammi mon tres chere ame

I'll write again everyday and send it to Reda at all opportunities God bless you *my dearest Dear life I shall ever love you.*

iv

Friday Night.

My Dearest Soul,—How happy you made me by your letter it seems ages to me since I heard from you tho' in reality not many days, but minutes count for years with those that love, but I don't like to hear that you have still a little cough you don't take care of yourself I wish I could take care of you indeed. . . . Mr. G—— is just gone out for an hour, so I take this favourable time to write to you and shall send it off soon in the morning, I long most heartily for the time I shall see you again, your letter came perfectly safe I was so happy to get it, I hope you will have received my last safe where I sent you the Acct. of Hollywell only think of your having lost to Tarpolley I should have been so miserable if I'd known it at the time I'm so sorry, how dreadful at that time of night its a horrible intricicket road, I'd a very odd discourse with Mr. G—— to day about my Lord he first begun by saying he was very uneasy about his health and did not think he was so well as he used to be and he ought to take great care, he after that said he thought he gave up his whole time attention & fortune to horses and was worse and worse infatuated than ever about them & that he never could talk upon any other subject therefore he could never have any discourse with him and that he would lose all his acquaintance but Jockeys, I could not help laughing at his description of him which was very just for sais he he will set for half an hour with his eyes fixed on a Table or a Chair and then apply to Tomm or anybody that is by, do you know what Mare such a Filly was got out of, or can you tell what Horse such a Colt was got out of by Gd I've got the best stud in England nobody

LOVERS

will have any horses to run but me very soon, then if he or anybody that dont understand that subject offers to mention anything else he is as cross as anything for half an hour, and then fast asleep, so says Mr. G—— . . . this was as you may imagine a Tete a Tete subject but its so exact a picture of him I resolved you should have it— . . . * . . . in bed before eleven when I always dream of you my Dearest Friend—I hope soon to have a letter from Carry with some writing from you in milk . . . † how I long for the 1st and 2nd of Decr yet it is being too selfish for what a situation for you but I'll say no more of that as you are so kind to say you dont mind it, today is my Birthday I think it has turned out quite lucky to me as I've such an opportunity of writing to you.

Mr. Gro*****r is come home which obliges me to shorten it vexes me tho' I've nothing but nonsense to talk off—I dont like to be interrupted & prevented & I must write to Carry a line as I inclose this letter to her, I see Almacks begins the 1st Decr do take a Dance there, and tell me how it looks it will make but two days difference & I cant bear to prevent you from everything O' dear I am always teasing you I think I'm quite provoked at myself, I wish to God I was the only one to suffer in an uncomfortable situation and I'd bear everything with pleasure but the thoughts of my dearest Friend being unhappy is ten times more to me than anything I could ever suffer, indeed my dearest life it is believe me that is my greatest anxiety and concern, I can never make you amends but my sincerest love you shall ever have from the bottom of my soul that you are kind enough to say you value and as long as you esteem it and give me yours it will be our mutual comfort, God bless you my dearest soul—I'm glad the time is fixed for the Parliament meeting which I hope will bring up to Town

Farewell a thousand times most sincerely till we meet
My Dearest Soul ever most faithfully and affectionately
Yrs
H*****

* Describes how she passes her time.

† Further ill account of my Lord.

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v

My Dearest Soul,—I hope you are well I've come up stairs for bed, so steal this safe moment to write to you a line to tell you of something that has happened, and tho' I hate to say anything to you that may be disagreeable still I'm always determined never to conceal any thing from you, as you can then act as you think will be best my Maid tells me there has been some of our servants telling her that its all about here that you have been here & she has really told me every particular that you came down with us and that we met here in the Fields and Lanes and the day you went away, and that you was at Chester, at Halkin and they knew you there, that you used to leave your horses at Eccleston the little Alehouse, that you had a gentleman with you & a servant, I denyed it & said I wd acquaint my Lord and make everybody prove what they had said, upon which she turned pale, looked vastly frighted, and said it was from one person she had heard it & beg'd it might not be mentioned unless she heard more this makes me hope she made the most of it but yet I fear it has been much talked of by her naming so many particular facts, don't be alarmed my dear friend, but act as you think proper in regard to your coming down the worst come to the worst, thank God my Lord has told Mr. Gros**** before me, we should all be in town in about **** month. Nothing could make me so unhappy as not to see you, but at the same time we had better not do anything imprudent, and we might possibly not be able to meet but very seldom, which when you had taken so much trouble in coming would give me if possible more concern than for you not to come, but consider it well over, my Dearest Friend, if we can meet with safety, nothing could give me so much but our feelings, and our danger in this is mutual, for our meeting imprudently might endanger our not meeting so often at another time, but could it be done safely it would be a pity to lose any of our (too few) opportunities.—I was very much frightened at first, but by thinking it over am not quite so alarmed, and hope it is not so much talked

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off as she said.—she said that at first they said there was Highwaymen in the roads about, and that afterwards a person from Chester knew you and discovered it to everybody. I hope they won'd dare to say anything to my lord, as he has not said a word, or even named you, and he has been at Halkin. Mrs. Gros****r leaves us tomorrow, and on Wednesday we go to Mrs. H***** where I hope to receive your Dear Letter—I'm miserable in having any thing to tell you that can give you the least uneasiness it vexes me more than anything I feel myself, what do you think about it, Pray my dear Soul do either way you think best and I hope as we have been tollerably fortunate hitherto, we may scramble thro it somehow or other, but I dont know what to say what to advise but I'm sure you can judge much better than me pray let me have a few lines in Lemon Duce by C***** to tell me, I wish I could find a Meathod for you to write in ink, I'll consider about it night and day but I fear I can't but realy I make out the Lemon Duce very well, we leave Mrs. H again on Friday, dont my dear Soul be alarmed about the Affair, if you think it better not to come we shall meet I hope not 3 weeks later thank God for that he seems horridly tired of being here & and impatient to be in town he sais he'd not be from London when the parliament met for the world & I hope will be there some days before, he is not yet well so any how thank God we shant be very long asunder, tho' indeed while I say so, a day nay an hour appears Ten thousand years, but my Soul if you think you can come safely we'll settle everything the best thats possible and we may perhaps do very well—O I dont know what to say, I say and unsay every minute—I long to see you and yet I would not do anything that might be against our future meeting, in short I'll say no more for I scarcely know what I say my Dearest Soul think it over and I'm vastly in hopes every thing will be for the best & will happen well and fortunate at last, I am racked between to se my Dear Friend and fear of being found out but dont my life be uneasy, think it over and either way you determine will I dare say end well, I'v told Carry you will write a Line to me by her

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

in Lemon Duce,—how happy it is we come to town so soon let us think of that—this Letter is to set at 6 in the morning by the post as I must send it down as soon as I can that my sitting up may not be particular & cause my letter being suspected so I wont say much more but that I love you and always shall my Dear Dear Friend pray dont be vext about this affair ask Trusty* what he thinks of it God bless you my Dearest Dear Soul. Ever with the most sincere affection yrs

H*****.

vi

Tuesday Evening 5th

My Dearest Soul,—Most sincerely unhappy I've felt ever since we parted both in having lost your dear Company which is so great a happiness to me and in the thought of the cold dreadful journey you have had indeed I've been miserable about you, I'm afraid you are scarcely arrived yet, I've not heard any news at all about you, but I've been very low spirited ever since tho I've hid it as much as in my power, I don't know to express my gratitude to you for the constant proofs you give me of the sincerity of your affection. I'm sure all the trouble you have taken only just to see me thoroughly convinces me of it you say all the return you desire is my affection and Friendship indeed you have them most sincerely my heart is always with you indeed it is my dearest Friend—they came home Sunday to dinner he was here a little before the rest he came on horseback as he rode part of the way I grew in a fright least as he rode he might have come to shorten the way through the fields & met you, but hope as he did not arrive till nearish 3 that you was got to where you dined first, today they are gone to Chester to dinner, and tomorrow I believe they set out for Wales again for 2 days I wish we had known it beforehand & may be we might have contrived to have made some use of it, but perhaps it may in the end be better as it is, I hope I shall have the

* Getticg, a servant of The Duke's.

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happiness of hearing from you & if he is in Wales I shall endeavour to catch my letter before he comes—I hope C wont make any objections to receiving and sending the letters by the means you propose of sending Trusty to her, if she does pray let me know & I'll be sure to find a method of writing to you & I'll tear my brains to pieces but I'll find some way of hearing once or twice from you while we are here I thank God I dont believe it will be long for he has been talking to-day of setting out and sais he believes he shall go before he at first thought of which was against the meeting of Parliament I am in vast hopes he will fix the day soon & I will immediately write you word when I know, as soon as I hear from you and C**** and find if I may write again by her I will take the first moment anyhow if I dont hear to the contrary from C**** I'll write the beginning of next Week that if you send on Thursday sevenight it will be at C****ys I shall be sure to find some opportunity as I dare say he will not be long together at home—while I feel it so cold I'm in pain and misery for you good God in those post Chaises how starving it must be I'm so in fear it should hurt your breast, do take care of yourself pray my Dear Dear Friend and if you aint quite well pray take some advise dont take it ill my plaguing you so but realy I love you so much I can't help wishing you to take more care of your health.

He seems in a tolerable humour not much one way nor other but still drinks toast & water and very little wine he had a little weazing last night. I suppose dining out to-day wont do him much good he sais as the weather is so cold he could get off his business in Wales, but I really beleive he is very glad of any excuse to carry him there as he didnt seem to know what to do with himself at home.

I do beleive and hope there is no suspicions about you, and indeed tho painful I'm sure to both of us I really believe it was the most prudent thing possible to go before people talked or began to suspect—nothing here has happened worth relating. . . . * the best thing we can possibly

* Details about "a most horrid play" in which Her Ladyship was engaged.

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do now is to make him beleive it is all over between us and we have really I beleive blinded him for some time at least he has no proof about us & I hope to God that by degrees his suspicions will be lull'd & that we may form some plans for our meeting happily we must not despair but look forward that is the only way to support ourselves under our present unhappy situation & there is probability of many things happening to mend the present, so we think like philosophers and beleive everything is for the best & hope we may enjoy better days soon, and indeed I think it very probable my dearest and dear soul with this idea be happy if I knew you were so I should be more than half way to it as I assure you what concerns you is more to me than my own feelings upon any thing. God forbid there should be a Warr if you go what then remains for me but misery, dont lets think on that, no, its wrong one must not meet misfortunes, but how can I talk so, I'm sure that is not adopting the style I before proposed to look forward for better times.

I shall long to hear from you my dear life indeed I do I am afraid you had a miserable journey indeed I hope C—— will manage our letters as you send if she wont dont be uneasy I'll certainly contrive some other means to write & to hear from you—I shall write to C——as soon as I've done this and persuade her all I can, I really think nobody can suspect anything as you said—so if you send to her the Thursday after you get this you'll find another from me, I think I have better now conclude and write my letter to C—— as I imagine he will come home pretty soon, or I cou'd write to you, for ever, indeed my dearest Soul I could tire you to death with nonsense.

I shall only now add what I have often said to you my Dearest Friend that you may ever be assured of my tenderest and most sincere affections and that I shall ever remain in the truest sense of the expression Yrs Most Faithfully & Affectionately

You have thoro'ly convinced me of your regard for me which I praise above all things & can never thank you enough for the proofs you have given me of your Love.

LOVERS

(In the cover of the preceding letter was written):

Pray my dear do tell my poor Friend Foulkes I very sincerely condole with him & advise him not to mind the old people if he loves her & she loves him to persuade her to run away with him, it will be delightful I wish to Goodness they wou'd.

vii

My Dearest Soul, I'm in constant hopes of C—— sending me a letter from you 'and I'm very anxious to hear you are arrived safe I imagine and hope it will come to-morrow thank God I've some delightful news to tell you my Ld setts out for London next Wednesday. . . . I feer you cannot read this but I'm writing foast as I feer this will be too late for the poast—Everything goes on well and he is in very tollerable. . . . I feer this letter will be certainly too late so must conclude my dear Soul I do love you most sincerely indeed I'm out of my wits with joy at the thought of seeing you my Dear Friend believe me ever most sincerely and affectionately Yrs.

What a scrawl I always write to you I'm really ashamed to a degree of myself my Dear Soul. . . . you may write in ink safely as he is sure to go on Wednesday shd any unforeseen Accident keep him which is totally improbable I would meet the Post Boy in the Lane once more dearest Soul Farewell.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

LADY HAMILTON TO LORD NELSON

Emma was the resplendent wife of the good-natured Sir William Hamilton, English Ambassador at Naples, when she first met and became the inspiration of Nelson. She had been a nursemaid. She was of the Nell Gwynne type, affectionate, generous, and without any sense of tradition.

i

Naples, June 30th, 1798.

DEAR Sir, I take the opportunity of Captain Hope to write a few lines to you, and thank you for your kind letter by Captain Bowen.

The Queen was much pleased, as I translated it for her, and charges me to thank you; and say she prays for your honour and safety—victory she is sure you will have. . . .

I write to you, my dear sir, in confidence and in a hurry.

I hope you will not quit the Mediterranean without taking *us*. We have our leave, and everything ready at a day's notice, to go; but yet I trust in God and you, that we shall destroy these monsters before we go from hence. Surely their reign cannot last long!

If you have any opportunity, write to us, pray, do; you do not know how your letters comfort us.

God bless you, my dear, dear sir! and believe me ever your most sincerely obliged and attached friend.

Emma Hamilton.

ii

Thursday Evening, June 12th, 1799.

I have been with the Queen this evening. She is very miserable, and says that although the people of Naples are for them, in general, YET things will not be brought to that state of quietness and subordination, till the fleet of Lord Nelson appears *off Naples*. She therefore begs, intreats and conjures you, my dear Lord, if it is possible to arrange matters so as to be able to go to Naples.

LOVERS

Sir William is *writing* for General Acton's *answer*.

For God's sake consider it and do! We will go with you,
if you will come and fetch us.

Sir William is ill. I am ill. It will do us good.

God bless you! Ever, ever yours sincerely.

E. Hamilton.

iii

(The following touching letter did not reach Nelson till
after his death at Trafalgar.)

Canterbury, October 8th, 1805.

Dearest Husband of My Heart,—You are all in this
world to your Emma—may God send you victory and
Honour and soon to your *Emma*, *Horatio*, and paradise
Merton, for when you are there it will be paradise. My
own Nelson. May God prosper you and preserve you
for the sake of your affectionate

Emma.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MADAME D'OLONNE TO THE PRINCE DE CONTI

The Prince had written expressing his despair that all declarations of love resembled one another, in spite of the differences in sentiment, and that although he loved her more than the world knew how to love, he had to use the words about love used by the world. The Conti were a branch of the house of Bourbon-Condé. Madame was the wife of a court official under Louis XV.

[1750.]

IF there is anything to prevent you being believed when you speak of your love, it is not its importunacy, it is that you speak too much; ordinarily the grand passions are more confused, and it seems to me that you write like a man who has much wit, who is not amorous and who wants to make people think he is; and since it seems so to myself, that dies for what you say to be true, judge what it must seem to those people to whom your passion is a matter of indifference. They would not hesitate to think that you wish to jest; as for me, who never would pass judgment rashly, I accept the part you offer me, and I want very much to judge by your conduct of the feelings that you have for me.

LOVERS

MADAME STAAL DE LAUNAY TO THE CHEVALIER DE MENIL

The writer was the author of vivacious *Memoires* of the French Regency under Philippe d'Orleans—1715-1723—a period noted for corruption. She had been employed as a reader by the Duchess of Maine.

15th July, 1719.

NO, I cannot live without seeing you. I thought that hope would sustain me; it sustains me not at all; I cannot bear my state; I am in despair, I vainly try all means of distraction; nothing has any effect on me. I have given myself up to the pleasure of entertaining you. I have had a talk with you more tender and more poignant than I have ever dared in your presence; but when you had vanished from my imagination, which was enchanted by the pleasure of possessing you, the bitterest grief seized on my heart. All things afflict me; all things are insupportable; I suffer everything that any one can suffer. How I pity you if you suffer as much as I! No, I desire with all my heart that your condition should not be so preposterous! It seems to me at this particular moment that I prefer absolutely your repose to your love. If however you were to tell me that you were as satisfied now as you were yesterday at the same hour, I should reproach you for that content which I wish you. A soul agitated by a lively passion hardly knows its own wishes, nor even what it thinks. What I find emerges more clearly out of this confusion is that I would wish you to be perfectly happy, and that you should hold your happiness only with the love which is favourable to our vows: do you not think in the same way? Say, speak, I listen with avidity, and however far away, I have no consolation but that of hearing you and of speaking to you. Ah! do you torment me? But do not fear that my sufferings dishearten me; you have well paid me for the hurt you do me. And I still expect fresh gifts from you, which all the ills in the world could not make me renounce. Let us love, love one another, and find in

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the charms of our love a satisfaction which cheats the fate which persecutes us.

Is this all that we have to say to each other to-day? No, if I again find time and the opportunity to say more to you, I shall not fail to do so. On your side, profit by any facilities which you are able to use to assure me of your tenderness and your trust in mine. Certainly if you are not as happy as anyone could be, at least you are more loved than anyone has ever been.

LOVERS

JULIE DE LESPINASSE TO HIPPOLYTE DE GUIBERT

Mlle. de Lespinasse held a brilliant salon which was the resort of famous men, including the encyclopædists. She died in 1776. Guibert was a French officer and writer on military science.

i

Sunday, 6 p.m., 13th November, 1774.

AH! my love, you wrong me, and that is a heavy malediction for you as for me is the feeling which fills me. You were right to tell me that you had no need to be loved as I know how to love. No, that is not your measure; you are so perfectly amiable that you must be or become the first aim of all those charming ladies who put on their head all that they had inside it, and who are so loveable that they love themselves above all. You will afford pleasure to nearly all the women and will gratify their vanity. By what doom have you kept me alive, and yet make me die of anxiety and pain? My love, I do not complain: but I afflict myself with the thought that you set no store by my repose; this thought freezes and tears my heart by turns. How is one to have a moment's tranquillity with a man whose head is as bad as your carriage, who counts dangers as nothing, who never foresees anything, who is incapable of taking care, of exactitude, who never accomplishes what he projects, in a word, a man drawn after everything and whom nothing can arrest or fix? O my God! it is in your anger, it is in the excess of your vengeance that you have condemned me to love, to adore this man who must be the torment and the despair of my soul. Yes, my love, what you call your faults may cause my death, and I wish it; but nothing will make me cold again. If my will, if reason, if reflection could have effected anything, would I have loved you? Alas! how long have I been thrust, precipitated into this abyss of misery! I shiver at it still! the means of recalling a sweet sensation in my soul would be to believe that I shall see you to-morrow; but, oh, for

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the means of counting on this happiness! Perhaps your carriage is broken, perhaps some accident has happened to you, perhaps you are still at Chanteloup; in short, I fear everything, and nothing consoles me. My love, it is not enough for you that you should give me anxiety, you also blame me. I should have written to you at Chanteloup; and in your last letter from Bordeaux, you told me that perhaps you would not go to Chanteloup. Eh! good God! with what shall I confound you? you will reprove yourself, and shall I then love you the less? Goodnight. My door has not been once opened to-day but my heart has throbbed: there were instants when I feared to hear your name, and then I was desolated not to have heard it. So many contradictions, so many contrary movements are genuine, and are explained in three words: *I love you*.

ii

(Shortly before her death).

Saturday, 4 o'clock, May, 1776.

My dear love, you are too kind, too kind. You would restore a heart which has finally broken down under its heavy load of grief. I realise the value of your intention, but I no longer am worthy of it.

There was a time when I should have wished for nothing better than to be loved by you. Yes, my regrets might in that love have been extinguished; their bitterness would have been turned into delight: I would then have chosen to live. Now I desire only to die; I have found nothing in place of this, no sweet consolation for what I have lost. That is the only bitterness which I feel in my soul against you, dear. It was an evil fatality which led you to me when it did; it has cost me tears and pains and has at last been my ruin. I would I knew your future fate. I wish that, according to your nature, you may be happy. Your temperament and way of feeling will save you from ever being very unhappy. I received your letter at one o'clock; a violent attack of fever had prostrated me; how much

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pains and time I took to read it, I cannot tell you; but I did not want to put it aside. That laborious reading nearly made me delirious. I am hoping for news from you this evening. Good-bye, my dear friend; if life were granted me once more, I would wish to devote it again to loving you; but it is finished.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

NINON DE L'ENCLOS TO THE MARQUIS DE SÉVIGNÉ

Ninon de L'Enclos, 1620-1705, one of the brilliant courtesans under "le Grand Monarque," Louis XIV, drew Molière, La Rochefoucauld, Scarron and other famous men by her witty intelligence as much as by physical charms.

NOW where are all my fine dissertations against love to finish up? What have I done? While it would be true that my liking for you was as keen as I told you yesterday, ought I to have informed you of it? What charm do you avail yourself of to soften me to this point without my having the least presentiment? What! I told you that I love you! I told you with such passion that if you were accustomed to hear it! . . . But you believed never a word of it. Could a woman, after having spoken to you of love as I have done in the past, appear to you capable of feeling it? No, without doubt. You would sooner have taken me for a mad woman than for an impassioned lover. But why do I dread so strongly that you should form this false idea of me? Ah! if I were unhappy enough for you to have that idea indeed, what despair would be mine. Believe that my tenderness is real, sincere, excessive. Let my eyes announce to you what is passing in my heart when I say it; perhaps then you will not be able to forbid yourself loving me in your turn?

What gratitude do I not owe to you? It is you who have just given sensibility and life to my heart. It languished in speculation, while it was destined to know the tenderest feelings. Born to love and to know all raptures through love, I lost, wishing to examine, all the moments I ought to have spent only in feeling. How well has love revenged himself! Eh! how dear to me is his vengeance! What an error was mine! Seeking to analyse, forcing myself to disparage, I thought I could screen myself from his darts: was I not always so occupied? I fulfilled my destiny while seeming to desire to escape it. How many blasphemies

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have I not proffered against him! Ah! Marquis, I am punished in this; I feel it in the extreme agitation I am in.

C'est Vénus tout entière à sa proie attachée.

How blind I was! I preferred several lights, several vain reasons, to the happiness of feeling a passion and feeling it vividly! Yes, I wish to expiate such crimes, in giving up entirely to love this heart which, without doubt, is its handiwork and its domain, and which is going to be its most cherished abode. Everything languished in my eyes: my soul was beyond the reach of this delicious intoxication that only a lively passion can bring us. Love! I feel thy divine fury! my trouble, my transports, everything announces thy presence. To-day a new sun rises for me; everything lives, everything is animated, everything seems to speak to me of my passion, everything invites me to cherish it. The fire consuming me gives to my heart, to all the faculties of my soul, a resilience, an activity which is diffused through all my affections. Since I loved you, my friends are dearer to me; I love myself more; the sounds of my theorbo and of my lute seem to me more moving, my voices more harmonious. If I want to perform a piece, passion and enthusiasm seize me; the disturbance they cause interrupt me every minute. Then a profound revery, full of delight, succeeds my transports. You are present to my eyes; I see you, I speak to you, I tell you that I love you; and it always seems you say it more tenderly than when you are indeed present. So favourable to you is my imagination, and so contrary to you. I congratulate myself and I repent; I wish for you, and wish to fly from you; I write to you and tear up my letters; I re-read yours, they seem to me now gallant, now tender, rarely passionate and always too short. I consult my mirrors, I question my women about my charms. In brief, I love you; I am mad; and I do not know what I shall become, if you do not keep your word with me this evening.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MRS. PIOZZI TO WILLIAM AUGUSTUS CONWAY

Mrs. Piozzi, aged 73, had just retired to Bath, after the death of her second husband, when she fell in love with Conway, a young actor.

i

Weston-super-Mare, Sept. 1st, 1819.

THREE Sundays have now elapsed since James brought me dearest Mr. Conway's promise to write to me the very next—and were it not for the newspaper which came on Tuesday, the 24th August—sending me to rest comfortably, tho' sick enough, and under the influence of laudanum, I should relapse into my former state of agonizing apprehension on your account, but that little darling autograph round the paper was written so steady, and so completely in the old way—whenever I look at it, my spirits revive, and Hope (true Pulse of Life) ceases to intermit, for a while at least—and bids me be assured we soon shall meet again. I really was very ill three or four days; but the jury of matrons, who sat on my complaint, acquitted the apricots which I accused, and said they all, but two, proved *an alibi*.

Did I not once predict that dear Mr. Conway would live to an extreme old age? Your Sybil has always been right, and it was natural I should think so. The oak and cedar are said by naturalists to take the deepest root of all the trees; when these fancies cross your memory three-score years hence, do not forget the old friend of your young days, should you live to those of Methuselah; none more true, none more tender, none more disinterested will you ever find than H. L. Piozzi. Good night! and God bless my dearest and most valued friend! for whose perfect recovery and long-continued happiness I will pray till the post comes in... Yes; and till life goes out from poor H.L.P. I would keep up my spirits—as you wish me—and your spirits too. But how can I? Send a newspaper at least. Oh, for a

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breath of intelligence, however short, respecting health and engagements.

ii

Oct. 7, 1809.

I write—like my dearest friend—a brief communication; not to beg letters; the last half broke my heart, but to tell you that having directed mine to Mrs. Rudd, I fear it will not be received safely. I wish my beloved friend to keep his spirits up, but have enough to do on his dear account—to keep up my own. Yet shall not the one alleviating drop of comfort, as you kindly call my letters, ever fail.

Your being shut out by ill-health from fortune and from fame is very affecting indeed. Suffer nothing that you are not obliged to suffer; however, we shall get through the dusky night and enjoy a bright morning after all. Your youth and strength are full in perfection, but 'tis on God's favour I depend for your recovery. Here am I, however, praying most fervently for your restoration to all that makes life desirable, and giving God thanks for the power he lends me of affording solace to the finest soul, the fairest emanation of its celestial origin that ever was inclosed in human clay—such clay! But we must all be contented to bear our cross—the Paschal Lamb—type of our blessed Saviour, was ordered to be eaten with bitter herbs, and have I then been all the while complaining? Let us take things as God sends them, and be thankful—Dear Hope.

A cordial innocent as strong—

Man's heart at once inspirits—and serenest.

She sweetens pain and sorrows into joy, and sends me smiling through my tears to rest. Good-night—God send His angel to watch over you, and grant us yet a happy meeting by the 20th of October.

iii

Dec. 29, 1819.

Accept, dearest Mr. Conway, of a real Christmas pye; it will be such a nice thing for you when, coming late

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

home, there is no time for a better supper; but Berry begs you will not try to eat the crust; it will keep for weeks this weather.

iv

Feb. 2, 1820.

I would not hurry you for the world. . . . Take your own time, and do it in your own way; or rather suffer Nature to do it—that has done so much for you; more, I do think, than for any mortal man. See what a scar the surgeon, however skilful, would have made in that beautiful neck, while Nature's preparation, thro' previous agony, made suppurating ease come on unfelt; and the wound heals almost without a cicatrix—does it not??? So will it be with the mind. My own hasty folly—and my "*violent love outran the Pauser Reason.*"

v

Morning, Feb. 3rd—I have had some sleep, and am now on my knees giving thanks to God for the power He has lent to you, to resolve against sinful dissipation. Oh spare the soul which He thus designs to preserve; oh keep that person pure which His good spirit will one day inhabit—throwing a Radiance round. Accept my best acknowledgments for having promised me so sweetly that you would try to rise superior to all low desires. . . .

Do not stir out; do not tempt Heaven, or Heaven's king, who by your abscess has saved your precious life, so prayed for by poor

H. L. P.

vi

Feb. 3, 1820.

'Tis not a year and quarter since dear Conway, accepting of my portrait sent to Birmingham, said to the bringer: "Oh if *your lady* but retains her friendship; oh if I can but keep *her* patronage—I care not for the rest. . . . And now, when that friendship follows you through sick-

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ness and through sorrow, now that her patronage is daily rising in importance—upon a lock of hair given. . . . or refused by une petite traitresse—hangs all the happiness of my once high-spirited and high-blooded friend. Let it not be so. Exalt Thy Love-Dejected Heart, and rise superior to such narrow minds. Do not however fancy she will be ever punished in the way you mention; no, no. She'll wither on the thorny stem, dropping the faded and ungathered leaves—a China rose, of no good scent or flavour—false in apparent sweetness, deceitful when depended on. Unlike the flower produced in colder climates, which is sought for in old age, preserved even after death, a lasting and an elegant perfume—a medicine, too, for those whose shattered nerves require astringent remedies.

Let me request of you to love yourself, and to reflect on the necessity of not dwelling on any particular subject too long or too intensely. . . .

This is preaching, but remember how the sermon is written at three, four, and five o'clock by an octogenarian pen, a heart twenty-six years old, and as H. L. P. feels it to be all your own.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

DIOTIMA TO FRIEDRICH HOLDERLIN

Holderlin, a representative in German poetry of "Weltschmerz," became a tutor in the house of a banker, and he and the banker's wife, Susette Gontard, fell passionately in love. After nearly three years, a crisis occurred in their relationship. Holderlin went away suddenly in 1797, and began to suffer extreme depression. When he heard of her death in 1802 he lost his reason and, after lucid intervals, died insane in 1843. He introduced her as Diotima into the prose poem "Hyperion."

i

1798.

I MUST write to you, dear. My heart cannot bear to be silent any longer. Just once more do my feelings bid me speak to you, afterwards, if you wish, I will say no more. Now that you are gone, how desolate everything in and around me seems! It is as though my life had lost all meaning, pain is the only medium through which I feel it. . . .

In the open, free fields is where I find it most bearable, and I go constantly to the place where that dear hill rears up like a great wall to detain you and prevent your fleeing farther from me! When I get home again, I feel no longer as I did; before, it used to please me so to come near to you, now it seems as though I were going into a great chest to be imprisoned therein. Formerly if my children came to me from you, how it strengthened my oft-dreaming nature, when a gentle blush, a deep earnestness or a tear in the eye revealed your influence over them; now they no longer have this meaning for me, and I must often control my feelings for them.

LOVERS

ii

1798.

You know me well and have had a thousand proofs of how my heart is devoted to you and you know that when one sins against love, one wounds oneself.

iii

1798.

The sky is so clear to-day. To-morrow you will come for certain, if only I could obtain good news of you. How dark the future seems to me. Whatever happens, come what may, I will never leave you, you will always find me again!

iv

1799.

Only think, dear one, that the fate of our love may be my salvation or my complete ruin. I weep often the bitterest tears but it is these tears which preserve me. So long as you live, I will not go down. If I felt no more, love would vanish from my heart and what were life without love! I would be lost in darkest night and death. So long as you love me, I cannot grow worse. You support me and show me the way to beauty! Keep faith in me and build firmly on my heart. Farewell then, oh dearest, truest heart and believe, as I do, in the unchangeableness of our innermost nature and in the union of our beings.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MADAME DE STAEL TO BENJAMIN CONSTANT

The author of "Corinne" and literary and political studies, found consolation in the friendship of clever men when she with her children was banished from France by Napoleon, and lived at Geneva. She was the daughter of the banker and finance minister, Necker, who died in 1804. Constant, besides writing a fine novel and important Memoirs, worked for political ideals shared by his friend Madame de Staël.

October 1st, 1804.

DEAR Friend, Rejoice with me if Providence allows me to descend before you into the tomb. After the death of my father, I could not possibly endure yours. I shall follow the admirable man, beloved you, and shall await you there with a heart, which God will pardon, because it has loved too much. Look after my children! In the letter which you are to show them, I exhort them to love in you a man whom their mother has loved so much. Ah! this word "loved" that was our fate, what does it mean in the hereafter? My father's Creator is a kind Being. Pray to Him, my friend, through Him the dead stands in communication with the living. You know that by an arrangement between us a house brought by M. Fourcault for Madame de Nassau in the Rue des Mathuzins belongs to us, both under the stipulations that the interest belongs to you, and the capital, after you, to my daughter. If you would rather sell it, you must invest the money in a way approved of by the guardians, but the interest remains yours to your death. Farewell, my dear Benjamin; I hope that you at least will be near me when I die. Oh, I did not close my father's eyes: will you close mine?

Necker Stael de Holstein.

LOVERS

PRINCESS LOUISE ADELAIDE DE BOURBON-CONDÉ TO LOUIS DE LA GERVAISAI

These are the letters of a passionate friend, and may be included among these letters of avowed lovers, although the writer renounced such a role for herself. The difference in rank between her and the young officer made marriage seem out of the question.

i

1786.

I THOUGHT I should say nothing to my friend to-night; I have not been any too well since yesterday, but this is absolutely nothing, so let not my friend feel the slightest anxiety. When I got the writing-paper, I intended saying something quite different to him; I wanted to tell him first that I loved him, oh, very tenderly! and then, that I wept while thinking about him, although that was not the wretched cause of my weeping. I cry because he is not here, my dear one, who loves me well; I was so glad when I held his arm! Ah! how long time seems when I am separated from him! Yet I employ it in thinking of him, I see him ever; I hear him; I speak to him; I read his letters, his kind letters. Yesterday evening, before I had finished my own I read them three or four times, and after that I reread them once more, and then I thought over them until four in the morning. Yet all this gave me intense pleasure: oh, yes, my friend, I do assure you.

ii

Sunday, 20th August, 1786.

My friend, the fears which so hurt me at times, are based firstly upon a great mistrust of myself; it is very true: I am kind and my heart knows well how to love, but there you have all. You have a witty mind, I not at all: I may finish by boring you, and then, darling, I also think that a woman who truly loves is more constant than a man. You have so many objects for distraction, you feel so well

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

your strength and your superiority over us; you have so great an idea of liberty, for which you are born, that it is difficult for you to submit yourselves to bonds which your hearts form, sometimes in spite of you. We, my friend, we are born weak, we need support; our education extends only to making us feel that we are slaves and that we shall remain such. That idea is deeply impressed on our souls; what is imposed upon our hearts to us seems sweet, for we are destined to the yoke: moreover we are little subjected to distractions; crossed perpetually in our tastes, our amusements, by the prejudices, conventions and usages of the world, we have no freedom but in our sentiments, and the more we are obliged to shut them up within ourselves. All that, my friend, makes us, I think, attach ourselves more strongly or at least with more constancy. Perhaps I am mistaken and there is no sense in all I have just said. If so, my dear, one will be eager to tell me and to endeavour to give me juster ideas. Not much more than two hours ago you would have grumbled at me if I had not said good-night. Till to-morrow, my friend. Oh! how I do love you with all my heart.

iii

Oh! how much it costs me to break the silence that I have kept so long! Perhaps I am about to distress my friend? Perhaps I shall cause him to hate me? Hate! O Heaven! but yes, let him cease to love me, what I have feared so much is now what I strongly desire: that he should forget me and not be unhappy. Oh my God! what am I to say to him? and yet it is necessary to speak and for the last time. Listen my friend and know how your "good one" feels. You are going to discover that she is very weak and truly a slave of what you call prejudice but to the last moment she will be frank with you. For the last three months I do not know how I have existed; and enormous weight oppresses me, tears fill my eyes at any moment, the continual necessity of concealing the state of my feelings is an additional torture; not a day passes without my

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having to weep and it is the same at night when I retire to bed. Circumstances had given me cause for sorrow but I had found the strength to bear up because I did not feel remorse, having no real cause to reproach myself; to-day it is different. Oh! my friend, I have reflected on our relationship; less than three weeks sufficed to form it and in a trice nothing in the world existed for each of us but the other and we said: it is friendship. Friendship! oh, I have been blind, most blind. But I have searched the recesses of my heart and with the knowledge I have found, I think I know your heart also. Both of us are, I am sure of it, remote from the thought of profaning the sentiments each feels towards the other; up to now those sentiments have been pure, perhaps they might still be so for a long time, but, if ever. . . . Oh! no, no! I cannot bear the thought of exposing myself, even in the future, to what I most fear of anything in the world. What has at last convinced me that I must make a decision (oh, so cruel to the heart of your "good one") is a confidence made me by a woman some time ago. I was far from suspecting that any like her existed; she lived on good terms with her husband and gave no cause for gossip. For three years, however, she has loved a man whom she sees frequently; he is not at all a young man, he has afforded her assistance in many ways; he sees her when he wishes to and even writes to her. They are allowed much liberty being near relations. *They* also have said: it is friendship. For two and a half years they have indulged imprudently in these opportunities (meeting each other) for intercourse. Ought they not to be happy and desire nothing further? Well, for six months the struggles they have had to undergo have revealed to them the extent of their blindness regarding the feelings which bind them. This woman adores the man in question and the thought of seeking a way to separate is far from her mind, she relies on her strength to resist, but too often our presumption leads to disaster. I speak for them both, the man knows that the change in his feelings towards her is a source of torment, he persuades himself that he is able to resist causing her to put her courage

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to the test. He tells her so, swears that it is so and firmly believes it, but he is mistaken. He cannot conquer his weakness and perhaps it will come about that he will conquer *hers*. Oh! my friend, when this woman told me all this and added: "You are happy, you know nothing of these things" how my heart swelled! For a minute I was unable to speak. She then asked my advice. Advice from *me*, I exclaimed inwardly, *me*, who have been in the same position as she for more than two years and risks seeing it change as she has done. Yet I had to make some reply. I tried to obliterate the thought of self, to see her only problem and to let myself be guided by my reason and conscience alone. Both dictated to me the reply I make to you to-day. Avail yourself, I said, of your moments of strength and fear all those when your weakness might get the upper hand. *In love one can sacrifice all but duty, but to duty everything must give precedence.* After talking to that woman in this manner, I applied the same things to myself. My friend! oh, how necessary it is that I should have faith in this duty, in this virtue which lie before me! but how confused is my strength and weakness. It is, however, the fear of this weakness, which gives me the vital courage I have at this moment. I have asked God for such courage for a long time and he has vouchsafed it to me only to-day. Ah, without a doubt He has let me wander astray so that I might need Him the more and in order that I might no longer presume on my strength. Whatever His will, I am ready to submit and to bless His Providence without a murmur. My friend in the stress of this great agitation I have been unable to write to you. Countless efforts I made to do so but it was impossible. I pondered long over the action I should take: it was in vain that I sought to bring myself to it. I will confess to you that some of your letters have not been read in their entirety because I feared they might weaken me in my resolution. Oh, if I had written to you while still in doubt, it is then I might have weakened. Sometimes I have thought my silence would make you less sensible to what my duty told me I must do. My friend, do you think I should have lacked

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courage to employ this means also? Oh, here indeed you would find me a victim of what you term prejudice. You said that I was different to all other women; my friend will soon see that he has been mistaken on my account. He will say ah, can I know what he will say? Ah! do not hate me! but love me no more; think no more about me if that will distress you, it is your "good one" who conjures you. But what would you think of her if she acted against her conscience, would you esteem her while her conscience was mute. I have obeyed the impulse that carried me irresistibly towards you but my conscience speaks to me now and I cannot mistake its message; my duty is to hear it and to sacrifice to it even my happiness. Happiness! is it such when one suffers remorse, oh, no, it is unutterable torment to reproach oneself. My friend, my tender friend, oh I can no longer address you so; this is the last letter you will ever receive from me. Send me a word in reply that I may know whether I wish to live or to die. Oh! how I shall fear to open it. Listen if your reply is not too heartbreaking for a heart like your "good one's," have, I beg you, the kindness to put a small cross on the envelope; do not forget I entreat you. And now, Good-bye, good-bye my friend, your reply will finish our correspondence, it must be so. If you but knew how much I have wished to die since I have written to you! Listen, no further opportunities of meeting must be sought. Rather must they be avoided and for a long time. If you come to Paris and you visit Mesdames — where I have sometimes been, I think it would be well that you tried not to be there when I myself might be. My friend, what will become of me? Oh! have pity on me, have pity. And yet, strangely enough, what I have written has given me relief; however unfortunate one may be to do one's duty brings relief to the oppressed soul. Good-bye, tender friend, I believe I have done wrong but I shall do so no more.

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CHRISTIANE VULPIUS TO GOETHE

Goethe had several children by Christiane before, in 1806, he married her, after a liaison of 20 years.

i

Weimar, 30th Sept., 1796.

THAT you should not be cheerful in such circumstances I can quite understand, and when one thinks how sad it is to lose a child, one feels with all who do so. Is it the little or the big one? I also am not at all in good spirits. I felt sure you would arrive home to-day. The cold days and long evenings are not pleasant. The little boy said to-day, "Ah, God, will my father never return?"

With best wishes and love,
Christiane.

ii

Weimar, 6th Nov., 1796.

Since you have been away I have enjoyed no peace of mind, for just after your departure I learnt that many people are ill there and many deaths have taken place (in Ilmenau); consequently, I am very anxious about you and my little one. I think you should return directly your business is done for I shall not be at peace till I have you again. I have not been to service because I could not get comfort. . . .

Schiller has written to me and I have sent him what I have written. I don't know whether it is correct.

Kiss the little one for me. With love,
Christiane.

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iii

(Written just after Goethe had set out on a journey which
was to last three months.)

Hanover, 7th Aug., 1797.

I am sending you just a few lines. To be sure, I am far from happy since you are absent but I will bear up well and not grieve and always bear in mind how greatly you love me and how good you are to me. I thank you again for all your love and affection, I am quite pleased to think that our treasure is with dear Frau Rath.

Fare thee well, in haste.

Christiane.

SECTION IV

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

Devotion is the ultimate form of women's love.—*Saint-Evremond*.

Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks, shall win my love.—*Shakespeare*.

Women bestow on friendship only what they borrow from love.—*Chamfort*.

Woman's counsel is not worth much, but he that despises it is no wiser than he should be.—*Cervantes*.

SECTION IV

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

MARJORY FLEMING TO HER MOTHER

Little Marjory Fleming did not live to be more than a wonderful child. "She died young." Her friendship was a joy to Sir Walter Scott.

i

October 12, 1811.

MY dear Mother,—You will think that I entirely forgot you, but I assure you that you are greatly mistaken. I think of you always and often sigh to think of the distance between us two loving creatures of nature. We have regular hours for all our occupations, first at 7 o'clock we go to the dancing and come home at 8, we then read our Bible and get our repeating and then play till ten then we get our music till 11 when we get our writing and accounts we sew from 12 till 1, after which I get my gramer and then work till five. At 7 we come and knit till 8 when we don't go to the dancing. This is an exact description. I must take a hasty farewell to her whom I love, reverence and doat on, and who I hope thinks the same of

Marjory Fleming.

P.S.—An old pack of cards would be very expeftible.

ii

September, 1811.

My dear Little Mama,—I was truly happy to hear that you were all well. We are surrounded with measles at present on every side, for the Herons got it, and Isabella Heron was near Death's Door, and one night her father lifted her out of bed, and she fell down as they thought

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lifeless. Mr. Heron said,—“That lassie’s deed noo.” “I’m no deed yet.” She then threw up a big worm nine inches and a half long. I have begun dancing but am not very fond of it, for the boys strikes and mocks me. I have been another night at the dancing; I like it better. I will write to you as often as I can; but I am afraid not every week. I long for you with the longings of a child to embrace you—to hold you in my arms. I respect you with all the respect due to a mother. You don’t know how I love you.

So I shall remain, your loving child,

M. Fleming.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

DOROTHY TEMPLE TO SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE

Dorothy was twelve or thirteen when she wrote the following letter to her father; she died in 1679 of smallpox. Her mother was Dorothy Osborne, who appears among the fiancées.

(*Circa 1678*).

SIR,—I deferred writing to you till I could tell you that I had received all my fine things, which I have just now done; but I thought never to have done giving you thanks for them. They have made me so very happy in my new clothes, and everybody that comes does admire them above all things, but yet not so much as I think they deserve; and now, if papa was near, I should think myself a perfect pope, though I hope I should not be burned as there was one at Nell Gwyn's door the 5th of November, who was set in a great chair, with a red nose half a yard long, with some hundreds of boys throwing squibs at it. Monsieur Gare and I agree mighty well, and he makes me believe, I shall come to something at last; that is if he stays, which I don't doubt but he will, because all the fine ladies will petition for him. We are got rid of the workmen now, and our house is ready to entertain you. Come when you please, and you will meet nobody more glad to see you than your most obedient and dutiful daughter.

D. Temple.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MARGARET OF SCOTLAND TO HENRY VII

Still in her teens, Margaret, daughter of Henry VII, had been sent to Scotland under the care of the ambitious Earl of Surrey, to be married to James IV of Scotland.

(1503)

MY most dear lord and father,—In the most humble wise that I can think I recommend me unto your Grace beseeching you of your daily blessing, and that it will please you to give hearty thanks to all your servants, the which by your commandment have given right good attendance on me at this time, and specially to all these ladies and gentlewomen which hath accompanied me hither, and give credence to this good lady the bearer hereof, for I have showed her more of my mind than I will write at this time. Sir, I beseech your Grace to be good and gracious lord to Thomas, which was footman to the Queen my mother, whose soul God have assoyle; for he hath been one of my footmen hither with as great diligence and labour, to his great charge, of his own good and true mind. I am not able to recompense him, except the favour of your Grace. Sir, as for news I have none to send, but that my lord of Surrey is in great favour with the King here that he cannot forbear the company of him no time of the day. He and the bishop of Moray ordereth everything as nigh as they can to the King's pleasure. I pray God, it may be for my poor heart's ease in time to come. They call not my Chamberlain to them, which I am sure will speak better for my part than any of them that be of that council. And if he speak anything for my cause, my Lord of Surrey hath such words unto him that he dare speak no further. God send me comfort to His pleasure, and that I and mine that be left here with me be well entreated such ways as they have taken. For God's sake, Sir, hold me excused that I write not my self to your Grace, for I have no leisure this time, but hold a wish I would I were with your Grace now, and many times more, when I would answer. As for

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

this that I have written to your Grace, it is very true, but I pray God I may find it well for my welfare hereafter. No more to your Grace at this time, but our Lord have you in His keeping. Written with the hand of your humble daughter,

Margaret.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE PRINCE OF WALES

Prince Albert Edward, afterwards King Edward VII, was twenty-eight years old at the time of this letter, as he pointed out in his reply, which opened : " I fear, dear Mama, that no year goes round without your giving me a jobation on the subject of racing. . . . " — *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol II Second Series, 1862-1878. Ed. by George Earle Buckle. John Murray 1926.

Balmoral,

1st June, 1870.

DEAREST Bertie,—. . . Now that Ascot Races are approaching, I wish to *repeat earnestly and seriously*, and with reference to my letters this spring, that I trust you will, . . . as my Uncle William IV and Aunt, and we ourselves did, *confine* your *visits* to the Races, to the *two* days *Tuesday* and *Thursday* and *not* go on *Wednesday* and *Friday*, to which William IV never went, nor did *we* . . .

If you are anxious to go on those *two* great days (though I should prefer your not going *every year* to *both*) there is no *real* objection to *that*, but to the other days there is. Your example can do *much* for good, and may do an immense deal for evil, in the present day.

I hear every true and attached friend of ours expressing *such anxiety* that you should gather round you the really good, steady, and distinguished people. . . .

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

*LOUISA, QUEEN OF PRUSSIA TO
CHARLES LOUIS FREDERIK MECKLENBURG
STRELITZ*

Louisa after passing through a troubled time, had returned to Berlin, where the court had been reassembled. She felt suddenly an access of joy one day, and exclaiming "Now at last I am completely happy," sat down and wrote this note to her father.

Neu-Strelitz,

22 June, 1810.

DEAR Father,—I am truly happy to-day as your daughter and as the wife of the best of all husbands.
Louise.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MARGARET OF FRANCE TO HENRY III

Margaret's coronation at Sens, May 28, 1235, had been the reason for her sister Eleanor's visit. The Countess of Gloucester was sister-in-law to the King.

(1235).

MARGARET, by the grace of God, Queen of France, to her dearest brother, Henry, by the grace of God the illustrious King of England: Greeting and a token of sincere affection.

We have received the letters of your highness, and perused them diligently. We are not a little glad to learn by them of your health, nay, we rejoice: of our own we return thanks for your enquiries. Concerning that you have asked us, that we should hasten the coming to you of our dearest sister, the queen of England we declare to your Excellency that though we desire not a little to be in her company, and especially in the present happy state by the divine guidance we have brought about, yet because we fear lest you should come into the bonds of some other lady on account of her long delay we have taken steps to hasten as may be her departure; and as long as we know the Countess of Gloucester is engaged in your affairs we shall not have good patience till we shall know that our sister afore said is in your society.

Given in Paris on the Monday after the feast of St. Remi.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

QUEEN MARY TO PRINCESS ANNE

Two royal sisters exchange a few words. Sarah Jennings, wife of the Duke of Marlborough, had great influence over her friend Anne. Marlborough had tried to get the Tory influence behind him to dethrone King William, and without replacing James the Second, hoped to give the crown to Anne, whom he could control through his high-tempered wife. Eventually the Duke was deprived of his offices and exiled with his duchess.

(1692).

HAVING something to say to you, which I know will not be very pleasing, I chuse rather to write it first, being unwilling to surprise you; though, I think, what I am going to tell you should not, if you give yourself the time to think, that never anybody was suffered to live at court in my Lord Marlborough's circumstances. I need not repeat the cause he has given the King to do what he has done, nor his unwillingness at all times to come to such extremitities, though people do deserve it.

I hope you do me the justice to believe, it is as much against my will, that now I tell you, that, after this, it is very unfit Lady Marlborough should stay with you, since that gives her husband so just a pretence of being where he ought not.

I think, I might have expected you should have spoke to me of it. And the King and I both believing it, made us stay thus long. But seeing you were so far from it, that you brought Lady Marlborough hither last night, makes us resolve to put it off no longer, but tell you, she must not stay; and that I have all the reason imaginable to look upon your bringing her, as the strangest thing that was ever done. Nor could all my kindness for you (which is ever ready to turn all you do the best way, at any other time) have hindered me showing you that moment, but I considered your condition, and that made me master myself so far as not to take notice of it then.

But now I must tell you, it was very unkind in a sister

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

would have been very uncivil in an equal, and I need not say I have more to claim. Which, though my kindness would make me never exact, yet when I see the use you would make of it, I must tell you, I know what is due to me, and expect to have it from you. 'Tis upon that account, I tell you plainly, Lady Marlborough must not continue with you in the circumstances her lord is . . .

Kensington Feb. 5.

PRINCESS ANNE TO QUEEN MARY

i

(This is dated from "the Cockpit, Feb. 6, 1692." The Cockpit was a room at Whitehall Palace.)

Your Majesty was in the right to think your letter would be very surprising to me. For you must needs be sensible enough of the kindness I have for my Lady Marlborough, to know, that a command from you to part with her must be the greatest mortification in the world to me; and indeed of such a nature, as I might well have hoped your kindness to me would have always prevented. I am satisfied she cannot have been guilty of any fault to you. And it would be extremely to her advantage if I could repeat every word that ever she had said to me of you in her whole live. I confess, it is no small addition to my trouble to find the want of your Majesty's kindness to me upon this occasion; since I am sure I have always endeavoured to deserve it by all the actions of my life.

Your care of my present condition is extremely obliging. And if you would be pleased to add to it so far, as upon my account to recall your severe command (as I must beg leave to call it in a matter so tender to me, and so little reasonable, as I think, to be imposed upon me, that you would scarce require it from the meanest of your subjects) I should ever acknowledge it as a very agreeable mark of your kindness to me. And I must freely own, that as I think this proceeding can be for no other intent than to give me a very sensible mortification, so there is no misery

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

that I cannot readily resolve to suffer, rather than the thoughts of parting with her. If after all this that I have said, I must still find myself so unhappy as to be farther pressed in this matter, yet your Majesty may be assured that, as my past actions have given the greatest testimony of my respect both for the King and you, so it shall always be my endeavour, wherever I am, to preserve it carefully for the time to come, as becomes

Your Majesty's very affectionate sister and servant.

ii

1692

I have now, God be thanked, recovered my strength well enough to go abroad. And though my duty and inclination would both lead me to wait upon your Majesty as soon as I am able to do it, yet I have of late had the misfortune of being so much under your Majesty's displeasure, as to apprehend there may be hard constructions made upon anything I either do, or not do, with the most respectful intentions. And I am in doubt whether the same arguments that have prevailed with your Majesty to forbid people from showing their usual respects to me, may not be carried so much farther, as not to permit me to pay my duty to you. That, I acknowledge, would be a great increase of affliction for me; and nothing but your Majesty's own command shall ever willingly make me submit to it; for whatever reason I may think in my own mind I have to complain of being hardly used, yet I will strive to hide it as much as possible. And though I will not pretend to live at the Cockpit, unless you would be so kind as make it easy for me, yet wherever I am, I will endeavour always to give the constant marks of duty and respects, which I have in my heart for your Majesty, as becomes

Your Majesty's very affectionate sister and servant.
Sion, May 20.

Anne.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

AGNES PASTON TO JOHN PASTON

What with coast pirates and occasional armed raids on one another by some landowners, the Pastons and their like were often harassed. They survived by hard-headedness and patience.

i

(1450.)
(To John Paston, dwelling in the Inner Inn of the Temple, at London, be this letter delivered in haste.

SON, I greet you, and send you God's blessing and mine; as for my daughter your wife, she fareth well, blessed be God! as a woman in her plight may do, and all your Sons and Daughters.

And for as much as ye will send me no tidings, I send you such as be in this Country; Richard Lynstead came this day from Paston and let me weet, that on Saturday last past, Dravell, half-brother to Warren Harman, was taken with enemies, walking by the Sea side, and have him forth with them, and they took two Pilgrims, a man and a woman, and they robbed the woman and let her go, and led the man to the Sea; and when they knew he was a Pilgrim they gave him money, and set him again on the land; and they have this week taken four Vessels of Winterton, and Happisborough and Eccles.

Men be sore afraid for taking of men, for there be ten great Vessels of the Enemy's; God give grace that the sea may be better kept than it is now, or else it shall be a perilous dwelling by the sea coast.

I pray you greet well your brethren, and say them that I send them God's blessing and mine, and say William that if Janet Lauton be not paid for the Crimson Coat which Alson Crane wrote to her for in her own name, that then he pay her, and see Alson Crane's name stricken out of her book, for she saith she will ask no man the money but Alson Crane. And I pray you that ye will remember the Letter that I sent you last, and God be with you.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

Written at Norwich, the Wednesday next before Saint Gregory (12th March).

By your Mother,
Agnes Paston.

ii

(about 1458.)

(To my well beloved Son, John Paston, be this delivered in haste.)

Son, I greet you well, and let you weet, that for as much as your brother Clement letteth me weet that ye desire faithfully my blessing; that blessing that I prayed your father to give you the last day that ever he spake, and the blessing of all saints under heaven, and mine mote come to you all days and times; and think verily none other but that ye have it, and shall have it, with that (on condition) that I find you kind and willing to the weal of your Father's soul, and to the welfare of your brethren.

By my counsel dispose yourself as much as ye may to have less to do in the world; your Father said, "In little business lyeth much rest." This world is but a thoroughfare, and full of woe; and, when we depart therefrom, right nought bear with us, but our good deeds and ill; and therefore it is good for every creature to be ready. Whom God visiteth him he loveth.

And as for your brethren they will I know certainly labour all that in them lyeth for you. Our Lord have you in his blessed keeping, body and soul. Written at Norwich, the 29th day of October.

By your Mother,
Agnes Paston.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MARGARET PASTON TO JOHN PASTON (*the younger*)

Concerning her daughter Anne's boarding and arranging for her marriage. Anne, while kept at home, fell in love with one of the chief menservants, but the affair was "nipped in the bud."

(about 1470.)

(To John Paston, the younger, be this delivered in haste.)

I GREET you well, and send you God's blessing and mine, letting you weet that since ye departed my Cousin Calthorpe sent me a letter complaining in his writing that for as much as he cannot be paid of his tenants as he hath been before this time, he proposes to lessen his household, and to live the straitlier, wherefore he desireth me to purvey for your sister Anne, he saith she waxeth high, and it were time to purvey her a marriage; I marvel what causeth him to write so now, either she has displeased him or else he hath taken her with some default; therefore I pray you commune with my cousin Clere at London and weet how he is disposed to her ward, and send me word, for I shall be fain to send for her, and with me she shall but lose her time, and without she will be the better occupied she shall oftentimes move me and put me in great inquietness; remember what labour I had with your sister (Margery), therefore do your part to help her forth, that may be to your worship and mine.

Item, remember the bill that I spake to you of to get of your brother of such money as he hath received of me since your Father's decease; see your Uncle Maultby if ye may, and send me some tidings as soon as ye may; God keep you. Written the Friday next before Saint Thomas of Canterbury (29 Dec.), in haste.

By your Mother,

Margaret Paston.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

DOROTHY BROWNE TO THOMAS BROWNE

This is Sir Thomas Browne's wife, writing to their elder son, who had gone to France at the age of 14, to complete his education.

i

(1660.)

DEAREST Tom, We have thought very long to hear from you. We had a letter from the Isle of White, but not since. Pray let us hear as often as you can and give your father an account how you spend your time, you had need make the best use of it, for you find by this time I am confident some inconvenience, in the first place a troublesome journey, which I hope God has delivered you out of, and many things will seem strange to you at first, but be sure to put your trust in God and be civill to all that you have to doe withall, and find out all that you can in that place, for in the summer I beleieve your father will have you goe to some other place. I hope you follow writeing and all elce can be learned there. We are all in good health thanks to God. That God of his mercy would be pleased to send yours and continue his blessing to you is the daily prayer of your affectionate Mother,

Dorothy Browne.

ii

(Unkle Mileham was Charles Mileham, of Yarmouth, her brother.)

(early in 1661.)

Dear Tom, I thought very long to hear from you and am now much joyd to hear you got so well to Bordeaux, it was the 26 of february when we received your letter. I beseech God of his mercy continue your health, and be carefull to spend your time to the best advantage. I understand it is a chargeable place which you are to live in; learn what you can tho it be something extraordinary now you are where you may improve yourself, if you like

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

to sing or dance learn, or any thing elce you like. Your Unkle will convey moneys to you. I thank God we are all well and want nothing but the hearing from you oftner; pray let us know if you want any thing and how you imploy your time; your father was well pleased with your account of your voiage and it will please very much if you continue informing of him still what you observe there. I suppose you can frequently send them to Mr. Dade and he to your Unkle Mileham. Be sure you omit not serving God and then you will (have) his Blessing upon all your endeavours, to whose protection I leave you with my Prayers for you.

Your loveing Mother,

D. Browne.

All the servants present their loves to you and are mighty joyd to hear of you and will observe your commands.

Your brother Ned is at Cambridge and is to commence Bachalar of arts this Christmas, if you want anything let me know and you shall be suplied. I hope you doe not forget your Painting. Pray be careful to serve God in the first place, and industrious to spend your time to your advantage that you may be the better for this Journey.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

MARGARET ROPER TO SIR THOMAS MORE

Margaret was the favourite daughter of the good Sir Thomas, who was beheaded, a few weeks after these letters were written to him, in the Tower of London. Besides their deep and fine feelings, they are evidence of the careful education which More's daughters all received. It was Margaret's husband, aided by her, who wrote the famous "Life" of her father.

i

(1534)

MINE own good father, it is to me no little comfort, since I cannot talk with you by such means as I would at the least way to delight myself among in this bitter time of your absence, by such means as I may, by as often writing to you, as shall be expedient, and by reading again and again your most fruitful and delectable letter, a faithful messenger of your very virtuous and ghostly mind, rid from all corrupt love of worldly things, and fast knit only in the love of God, and desire of heaven, as becometh a very true worshipper and a faithful servant of God, which I doubt not good father holdeth his holy hand over you, and shall (as he hath) preserve you both body and soul (*ut sit mens sana in corpore sano*) and namely, now when you have abjected all earthly consolations, and resigned yourself willingly gladly and fully, for his love, to his holy protection. Father, what think you hath been our comfort since your departing from us? Surely the experience we have had of your life past, and godly conversation and wholesome counsel, and virtuous example, and a surety not only of the continuance of that same, but also of great increase by the goodness of our Lord to the great rest and gladness of your heart devoid of all earthly dregs, and garnished with the noble vesture of heavenly virtue, a pleasant palace for the holy spirit of God to rest in, who defend you (as I doubt not good father but of his goodness he will) from all trouble of mind and of body, and give me your most loving obedient daughter and handmaid, and

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

all us your children and friends, to follow that that we praise in you, and to our only comfort remember and coming together of you, that we may in conclusion meet with you mine own dear father in the bliss of heaven to which our most merciful Lord hath brought us with his precious blood.

Your own most loving obedient daughter and bedeswoman Margaret Roper, which desireth above all worldly things to be in John Wood's stead, to do you some service. But we live in hope that we shall shortly receive you again, I pray God heartily we may, if it be his holy will.

ii

{An answer to another letter from the Tower in 1534.}

Mine own most entirely beloved father, I think myself never able to give you sufficient thanks, for the inestimable comfort my poor heart received in the reading of your most loving and goodly letter, representing to me the clear shining brightness of your soul, the pure temple of the holy spirit of God, which I doubt not shall perpetually rest in you and you in him.

Father, if all the world had been given to me, as I be saved, it had been a small pleasure, in comparison with the pleasure I conceived of the treasure of your letter, which though it were written with a coal is worthy in mine opinion to be written in letters of gold.

Father, what moved them to shut you up again, we can nothing hear. But surely I conjecture that when they considered that you were of so temperate mind, that you were contented to abide there all your life with such liberty, they thought it were never possible to incline you to their will, except it were by restraining you from the church, and the company of my good mother, your dear wife, and us your children and bedesfolk. But, father, this chance was not strange to you. For I shall not forget how you told us when we were with you in the garden, that these things were like enough to chance you shortly after.

Father, I have many times rehearsed to mine own com-

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

fort, and divers others, your fashion and words ye had to us when we were last with you : for which I trust, by the grace of God, to be the better while I live, and when I am departed out of this frail life, which I pray God I may pass and end in his true obedient service, after the wholesome counsel and fruitful example of living I have had (good father) of you, whom I pray God give me grace to follow: which I shall the better through the assistance of your devout prayers, the special stay of my frailty. Father, I am sorry I have no longer leisure at this time to talk with you, the chief comfort of my life, I trust to have occasion to write again shortly. I trust I have your daily prayer and blessing.

Your most loving obedient daughter and bedeswoman Margaret Roper, which daily and hourly is bound to pray for you, for whom she prayeth in this wise, that our Lord of his infinite mercy give you of his heavenly comfort, and so assist you with his special grace, that ye never in anything decline from his blessed will, but live and die his true obedient servant. Amen.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

LADY ALINGTON TO MARGARET ROPER

Lady Alyce Alington, wife of Sir Gyles Alington, was daughter of Sir Thomas More's second wife, and therefore half-sister to Margaret Roper. Their father was in the Tower.

(August, 1534)

Sister Roper, with all my heart I recommend me unto you, thanking you for all kindness. The cause of my writing at this time is, to show you that at my coming home, within ii hours after, my lord Chancellor did come to take a course of a buck in our park, the which was to my husband a great comfort, that it would please him so to do. Then when he had taken his pleasure and killed his deer, he went to Sir Thomas Barestrons to bed where I was the next day with him at his desire, that which I could not say nay to, for methought he did bid me heartily; and most especially, because I would speak to him for my father. And when I saw my time, I did desire him as humbly as I could, that he would (as I have heard say that he hath been) be still good lord unto my father. First he answered me that he would be as glad to do for him as for his father, and that (he said) did appear very well, when the matter of the nun was laid to his charge. And as for this other matter, he marvelled that my father was so obstinate in his own conceit, in that that everybody went forth withal save only the blind bishop and he.

And in good faith (saith my lord) I am very glad that I have no learning, but in a few of Æsop's fables, of the which I shall tell you one. There was a country in the which there were almost none but fools, saving a few which were wise and they by their wisdom knew that there should fall a great rain, the which should make them all fools, that should be fouled or wet therewith. They seeing that, made them caves under the ground, till all the rain was past. Then they came forth, thinking to make the fools do what they list, and to rule them as they would. But the fools would none of that, but would have the rule themselves for all their craft. And when the wise men saw that

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

they could not obtain their purpose, they wished that they had been in the rain, and had defiled their clothes with them. When his tale was told, my lord did laugh very merrily.

Then I said to him, that for all his merry fable, I did put no doubts, but that he would be good lord unto my father when he saw his time. He said, I would not have your father so scrupulous of his conscience. And then he told me another fable of a lion, an ass, and a wolf, and of their confession.

First the lion confessed that he had devoured all the beasts he could come by. His confessor assoiled him, because he was a king, and also it was his nature to do so. Then came the poor ass, and said that he took but one straw out of his master's shoe for hunger, by that means whereof he thought that his master did take cold. His confessor could not assoil this great trespass, but by and by sent him to the bishop. Then came the wolf and made his confession, and he was straitly commanded that he should not pass vi pence at a meal. But when the said wolf had used this diet a little while he wared very hungry, in so much that on a day when he saw a cow with her calf come by him, he said to himself, I am very hungry, and fain would I eat, but that I am bound by my ghostly father. Notwithstanding that my conscience shall judge. And then, if that be so, then shall my conscience be this that the cow doth seem to me now but worth a groat. And then if the cow be but worth a groat, then is the calf worth ii pence. So did the wolf eat both the cow and the calf. Now my good sister hath not my lord told me two pretty fables. In good faith they pleased me nothing, nor I wist not what to say, for I was abashed at his answer. And I see no better suit than to Almighty God. For he is the comforter of all sorrows, and will not fail to send his comfort to his servants when they have most need. Thus fare ye well mine own good sister. Written the Monday after St. Laurence, in haste,

Your sister Alyce Alington.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MARGARET ROPER TO LADY ALINGTON

After receiving the preceding letter from her sister, Margaret visited her father in the Tower and showed it to him. There ensued a long conversation in which Sir Thomas More explained the fables and countered his daughters' womanly arguments in favour of his yielding to the royal will. The long and famous letter in which this interview is recorded continues as follows.

When he saw me sit with this very sad, as I promise you sister my heart was full heavy for the peril of his person, for in faith I fear not for his soul, he smiled upon me and said : "How now daughter Margaret? What now mother Eve? Where is your mind now? Sit not musing with some serpent in your breast, upon some new persuasion to offer father Adam the apple yet once again?"

"In good faith father quod I, I can no further go but am (as I trow Cressid saith in Chaucer) comen to Dulcarnon even at my wit's end. For since the ensample of so many wise men, cannot in this matter move you, I see not what to say more, but if I should look to persuade you with the reason that Master Harry Patenson* made. For he met one day one of our men, and when he had asked where you were, and heard that you were in the Tower still, he wared (waxed) even angry with you and said: 'Why? What aileth him that he will not swear? Wherefore should he stick to swear? I have sworn the oath myself.' And so I can in good faith go now no further neither, after so many wisemen whom ye take for no sample but if I should say like Master Harry: 'Why should you refuse to swear father? For I have sworn myself.' "

At this he laughed and said: "That word was like Eve too, for she offered Adam no worse fruit than she had eaten herself."

"But yet father quod I by my truth, I fear me very sore, that this matter will bring you in marvellously heavy

* Sir Thomas's Fool.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

trouble. You know well that: as I showed you, Master Secretary sent you word as your very friend, to remember, that the Parliament lasted yet."

"Margaret" quod my father, I thank him heartily. But as I showed you then again, I left not this gear unthought of. And albeit I know well that if they would make a law to do me any harm, that law could never be lawful, but that God shall I trust keep me in that grace that concerning my duty to my prince, no man shall do me hurt but if he do me wrong (and then as I told you, this is like a riddle, a case in which a man may lose his head and have no harm). . . ."

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

ANNE THERESE, MARQUISE DE LAMBERT TO HER CHILDREN

Born in Paris, 1647, a daughter of a master of the accounts, she lost her father when three years old, and her mother married the ingenious Bachaumont, who took great pleasure in cultivating his step-daughter's talents. She married Henri Lambert, Marquis of St. Bris, in 1666; he died in 1688. Her house then became famous as a literary salon free from gaming. She died in 1733. Her two letters of "Advice" to her son and her daughter were printed in the first two-volume editions of her works. Her "Philosophy of Love, or New Reflexions on Women," printed at Paris 1727, became famous.

i

(To her daughter)

It may be necessary, my Daughter, to observe all the outward Rules of *Decorum*; but this is not enough to gain you the esteem of the world. It is the sentiments of the mind that form the character of a person, that lead the understanding, that govern the will, that secure the reality and duration of all our virtues. But Religion should be the principle and foundation of these sentiments It is not enough for the conduct of young people to oblige them to do their Duty: they must learn to love it. Authority is a tyrant only over the outward behaviour; it has no sway over the inward sentiments. . . .

A young person when she comes into the world frames to herself a high notion of the happiness reserved for her. She sets herself to obtain it; 'tis the source of all her cares. She is always on the hunt after her notion, and in hopes of finding a perfect happiness. This is the occasion of lightness and inconstancy.

The pleasures of the world are deceitful; they promise more than they perform; the quest of them is full of anxiety.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

Their enjoyment is far from yielding any true satisfaction, and their loss is attended with vexation.

To fix your desires, think that no solid or lasting happiness is to be found any where but in your own breast. Honours and riches have no charms that are lasting for any length of time; their possession extends our view, and gives us new desires. Pleasures when they grow familiar, lose their relish. . . .

Be assured, my daughter, that Perfection and Happiness cling together; that you can never be happy but by virtue, and scarce ever unhappy but by ill conduct. Whoever examines themselves strictly, will find that they never had any grievous affliction, but they occasioned it themselves by some fault, or by being wanting in some duty. Anxiety always follows the loss of innocence; but Virtue is ever attended with an inward satisfaction, that is a constant spring of felicity to all its votaries.

Do not however imagine that your only virtue is modesty; there are abundance of women that have no notion of any other, and fancy, that my practising it they discharge all the duties of society. They think they have a right to neglect all the rest, and to be as proud and censorious as they please. Anne of Bretaine, a proud and imperious Princess, made Louis XII suffer exceedingly; and the good prince used to say, when he submitted to her humour, *we must pay dear for the women's chastity*. Make nobody pay for yours; think rather that it is a virtue which regards only yourself, and loses its greatest lustre, if it be not attended with other virtues.

ii

(To her son)

. . . . Self-love got but little by your Father's advancement, which was the good of others. This made him the delight of all that lived under his government; and when he died, if they could have done it, they would have purchased him back again with their blood. His good qualities struck envy dumb, and all the world in their hearts applauded

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the King's disposal of his graces. In an age of general corruption, he had the purest morals; he thought in a different manner from the generality of mankind. . . . Your father left you nothing but his name and example. His name obliges you to bear it with dignity, and his virtues challenge your imitation. Here is a model by which you may form yourself: I do not ask more of you, but I will not excuse you for less.

You have this advantage over your ancestors, that they may serve to guide you. I am not ashamed to say that they left you no fortune, nor would they blush to own it, after employing their estates in the service of their Prince, and passing through Life without any injustice to others, or any meanness in their own conduct.

Great fortunes are so seldom innocent, that I easily forgive your ancestors for not leaving you any. I have done all I could to bring our affairs into some order, a point in which women can distinguish themselves no way but by economy. I shall do my utmost to discharge every duty incumbent upon me in my circumstances. I shall leave you as much as is fitting for you, if you are so unhappy as to have no merit, and enough in all reason if you have the virtues that I wish you. . . .

A man should know how to live with his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors, as well as with himself. With his superiors he should know how to please without sinking into meanness; he should show an esteem and friendship to his equals; should condescend to his inferiors so as not to let them feel the weight of his superiority, and should keep up a dignity with himself. . . .

The generality of young men think to distinguish themselves now-a-days by assuming a libertine air, which degrades them among men of sense. Such an air, instead of arguing a superiority of understanding, shows only the depravity of the heart

I might, my son, in the Order of your Duties, insist on what you owe to me, but I would derive it entirely from your heart. Consider the condition in which your father left me. I had sacrificed all that belonged to me, to raise

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his fortune, and I lost my all at his death. I saw myself left alone, destitute of any support. I had no friends but his, and I found by experience, that few persons are capable of being friends to the dead. I met with enemies in my own family: I had a law-suit upon my hands against potent adversaries, and my whole fortune depended on the event. I gained it at last without any power of my own, and without any cringing to others. In a word, I made the best I could of my ill circumstances; and as soon as ever my own fortune was mended, I set myself to make yours. Give me the same share in your friendship, that I shall give you in my little fortune.

I will have no affected respect. I would have all your regards to me come not from constraint, but purely from your heart. Let them proceed entirely from your inclinations, without being influenced by any motive of interest. In short, take care of your own glory, and I'll take care of everything else.

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THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE TO THE PRINCESS HORTENSE

Josephine was the widow of the Vicomte de Beauharnais when she married Napoleon in 1796. She was divorced in 1809. Hortense, her daughter by Beauharnais, married Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, and became the mother of Napoleon III.

Bordeaux,
23 April 1808.

I AM at the summit of joy, dear Hortense. The news of your happy accouchement was brought to me by Monsieur de Villeneuve yesterday. I felt my heart beating when I saw him come in, but I was expecting he had only news of a happy event, and my presentiment was not wrong. I have just received a second letter from the arch-deacon, who assures me that you are well, as is also your son. I know that Napoleon is consoled for not having a sister and that he loves his brother well. Embrace them for me; both of them. I received a letter from the Emperor yesterday; his health is very good. The Prince of the Asturias and Don Carlos dined with him the previous night; the next day he was expecting King Charles IV and the queen. But I dare not write you at too great a length for fear of tiring you. Take the greatest care of yourself; do not see too many people at first. Let me have news of yourself every day; I await it with an impatience as great as the tenderness with which I love you.

Josephine.

ii

Navarre,
3 April 1810.

I have arrived here in good health, dear Hortense, although a little tired by the way. I am sad at the welcome I received. The inhabitants of Evreux have shown much eagerness at my coming; but this festive appearance resembles a little the compliments of condolence. No

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doubt, I am pitied for being nothing now; but I banish all such melancholy thoughts. The Emperor is happy; he ought to be, and will be more and more. This thought is a great consolation to me, and the only one which keeps up my courage. Navarre will become a very fine home, but it requires much renovation and expenditure. Absolutely everything wants doing up. The chateau is uninhabitable. The people I have brought with me have only a little room each, of which the doors and windows do not shut. My apartment is just as tiny and inconvenient and the wood-work is in a bad state. The park is magnificent: it is a valley between two slopes most beautifully wooded; but there is too much water, which makes this abode damp and unhealthy. One ought to live in Navarre in the months of May, June, July, and even in the beginning of August. It is then the most enchanting place. In this present season Malmaison would be better for me. The few days I have spent there have already done me much good, and I count on returning in a month or three weeks. I have invited all the members of my household to come here, so I have with me only mesdames d'Arberg; d'Audenarde, and de Viel-Castel; also Mme Gazzani, who arrived three days ago. I am still awaiting mesdames de Colbert and de Turenne. The men who accompanied me are MM. de Monaco, de Viel-Castel, Turpin, Pourtales and d'Andlaw. The life I lead is that of the country. I go out walking or in a barouche, when it does not rain. In the evening I join in a game of backgammon with the bishop of Evreux, a very amiable man, notwithstanding his 75 years. Time moves a little slowly, but it will seem to go quicker when you are here. I await you impatiently. I have had your apartment prepared: it is not beautiful; you will be no more than camping out, but you know with what tenderness you will be welcomed.

Good bye, my dear daughter, I embrace you,
Josephine.

If the Emperor asks you for news of me, tell him, what is true, that my sole occupation is in thinking of him.

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LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU TO THE COUNTESS OF BATH

A digression on unchastity to her daughter, Mary. See Note to Lady Mary Pierrepont (Wortley Montagu) among the FIANCEES.

(Nov. 30, 1749)

MY dear Child,— . . . I will venture to tell you a small history in which I had some share. I have already informed you of the divisions and subdivisions of estates in this country, by which you will imagine there is a numerous gentry of great names and little fortunes; six of these families inhabit this town. You may fancy this forms a sort of society; but far from it, as there is not one of them that does not think (for some reason or other) that they are far superior to all the rest: there is such a settled aversion amongst them, they avoid one another with the utmost care, and hardly ever meet, except by chance at the castle (as they call my house), where their regard for me obliges them to behave civilly, but it is with an affected coldness that is downright disagreeable, and hinders me from seeing any of them often.

I was quietly reading in my closet, when I was interrupted by the chambermaid of the Signora Laura Bono, who flung herself at my feet, and, in an agony of sobs and tears begged me, for the love of the holy Madonna, to hasten to her master's house, where the two brothers would certainly murder one another, if my presence did not stop their fury. I was very much surprised, having always heard them spoke of as a pattern of fraternal union. However, I made all possible speed thither, without staying for hoods or attendance. I was soon there (the house touching my garden wall), and was directed to the bed-chamber by the noise of oaths and execrations, but, on opening the door, was astonished to a degree you may better guess than I describe, by seeing the Signora Laura prostrate on the ground, melting in tears, and her husband standing with a drawn stiletto in his hand, swearing she should never

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see tomorrow's sun. I was soon let into the secret. The good man, having business of consequence at Brescia, went thither early in the morning; but, as he expected his chief tenant to pay his rent that day, he left orders with his wife, that if the farmer, who lived two miles off, came himself, or sent any of his sons, she should take care to make him very welcome. She obeyed him with great punctuality, the money coming in the hand of a handsome lad of eighteen: she did not only admit him to her own table, and produce the best wine in the cellar, but resolved to give him *chère entière*. While she was exercising this generous hospitality, the husband met midway the gentleman he intended to visit, who was posting to another side of the country; they agreed on another appointment, and he returned to his own house, where, giving his horse to be led round to the stable by the servant that accompanied him, he opened his door with the *passe-partout* key, and proceeded to his chamber, without meeting anybody, where he found his beloved spouse asleep on the bed with her gallant. The opening of the door wakened them: the young fellow immediately leaped out of the window, which looked into the garden, and was open, it being summer, and escaped over the fields, leaving his breeches on a chair by the bedside—a very striking circumstance. In short, the case was such, I do not think the queen of fairies herself could have found an excuse, though Chaucer tells us she has made a solemn promise to leave none of her sex unfurnished with one, to all eternity. As to the poor criminal, she had nothing to say for herself but what I dare swear you will hear from your youngest daughter, if ever you catch her stealing of sweetmeats: “Pray, pray, she would do so no more, and indeed it was the first time.” This last article found no credit with me: I cannot be persuaded that any woman who had lived virtuous till forty (for such is her age) could suddenly be endowed with such consummate impudence, to solicit a youth at first sight, there being no probability, his age and station considered, that he would have made any attempt of that kind. I must confess I was wicked enough to think the unblemished

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reputation she had hitherto maintained, and did not fail to put us in mind of, was owing to a series of such frolics; and to say truth, they are the only amours that can reasonably hope to remain undiscovered. Ladies that can resolve to make love thus *extempore*, may pass unobserved, especially if they can content themselves with low life, where fear may oblige their favourites to secrecy: there wants only a very lewd constitution, a very bad heart, and a moderate understanding, to make this conduct easy: and I do not doubt it has been practised by many prudes beside her I am now speaking of. You may be sure I did not communicate these reflections. The first word I spoke was to desire Signoro Carlo to sheathe his poniard, not being pleased with its glittering: he did so very readily, begging my pardon for not having done it on my first appearance, saying he did not know what he did, and indeed he had the countenance and gesture of a man distracted. I did not endeavour a defence; that seemed to me impossible; but represented to him, as well as I could, the crime of a murder, which, if he could justify before men, was still a crying sin before God; the disgrace he would bring on himself and posterity, and irreparable injury he would do his eldest daughter, a pretty girl of fifteen, that I knew he was extremely fond of. I added, that if he thought it proper to part from his lady, he might easily find a pretext for it some months hence; and that it was as much his interest as hers to conceal this affair from the knowledge of the world. . . .

. . . . My compliments to Lord Bute: his kindness to you ought to obtain the friendship of all that love you. My blessing to your little ones. Think of me as ever,

Your most affectionate mother.

ii

Lovere, Nov. 1 (1751).

Dear Child,—I received yours of August 25th, and my Lord Bute's obliging notice of your safe delivery at the same. I wish you joy of your young son (Frederick Stuart, born Sept. 24, 1751), and of everything else. You do not

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mention your father, by which I suppose he is not returned to England, and am in pain for his health, having heard but once from him since he left it, and know not whether he has received my letters. I dare say you need not be in any doubt of his good opinion of you; for my part, I am so far persuaded of the goodness of your heart, I have often had a mind to write you a consolatory epistle on my own death, which I believe will be some affliction, though my life is wholly useless to you. That part of which we passed together you have reason to remember with gratitude, though I think you misplace it; you are no more obliged to me for bringing you into the world, than I am for coming into it, and I never made use of that common-place (and like most common-place, false) argument, as exacting any return of affection. There was a mutual necessity on us both to part at that time, and no obligation on either side. In the case of your infancy, there was so great a mixture of instinct, I can scarce even put that in the numbers of the proofs I have given you (of) my love; but I confess I think it is a great one, if you compare my after-conduct towards you with that of other mothers, who generally look on their children as devoted to their pleasures, and bound by duty to have no sentiments but what they please to give them; playthings at first, and afterwards the objects on which they may exercise their spleen, tyranny, or ill humour. I have always thought of you in a different manner. Your happiness was my first wish, and the pursuit of all my actions, divested of all self-interest. So far I think you ought, and believe you do, remember me as your real friend. Absence and distance have not the power to lessen any part of my tenderness for you, which extends to all yours, and I am ever your most affectionate mother.

I send no compliments to Lord Bute, having wrote to him this post.

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MARGARET FULLER OSSOLI TO HER MOTHER

Margaret Fuller, born in Massachussets in 1810, the daughter of a lawyer, was a teacher and linguist. She travelled in Europe, met the Marquis Ossoli, an Italian patriot, and married him in 1847. The Ossolis had helped in the Revolution and soon after this second letter was written they took ship to America. Their infant son died during an outbreak of smallpox on board, and the ship was wrecked on Fire Island, New York, both she and her husband being drowned.

i

Florence, December 1849

I DO not know what to write about the baby, he changes so much, has so many characters. He is like me in that, for his father's character is simple and uniform, though not monotonous, any more than are the flowers of spring, flowers of the valley. Angelino is now in the most perfect, rosy health, a very gay, impetuous, ardent, but sweet-tempered child. He seems to me to have nothing in common with his first babyhood, with its ecstatic smiles, its exquisite sensitiveness, and a distinction in the gesture and attitudes that struck everybody. He is now come to quite a knowing age—fifteen months.

In the morning as soon as dressed, he signs to come into our room; then draws our curtain with his little dimpled hand, kisses me rather violently, pats my face laughs, crows, shows his teeth, blows like the bellows, stretches himself, and says "bravo." Then having shown off all his accomplishments, he expects, as a reward, to be tied in his chair, and have his playthings. These engage him busily, but still he calls to us to sing and drum, to enliven the scene. Sometimes he summons me to kiss his hand, and laughs very much at this. Enchanting is that baby-laugh, all dimples and glitter,—so strangely arch and innocent! Then I wash and dress him. That is his great time. He makes it last as long as he can, insisting

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to dress and wash me the while, kicking, throwing the water about, and full of all manner of tricks, such as, I think, girls never dream of. Then comes his walk ;—we have beautiful walks here for him, protected by fine trees, always warm in mid-winter. The bands are playing in the distance, and children of all ages are moving about, and sitting with their nurses. His walk and sleep give about three hours in the middle of the day.

ii

Florence, May 14, 1850.

I will believe I shall be welcome with my treasures—my husband and child. For me, I long so much to see you! Should anything hinder our meeting upon earth, think of your daughter, as one who always wished, at least, to do her duty, and who always cherished you, according as her mind opened to discover excellence.

Give dear love, too, to my brothers; and first to my eldest, faithful friend! Eugene; a sister's love to Ellen; love to my kind and good aunts, and to my dear cousin E—God bless them!

I hope we shall be able to pass some time together, yet, in this world. But if God decrees otherwise,—here and Hereafter,—my dearest mother,

Your loving child,

Margaret.

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THE SAME TO BEETHOVEN

Saturday Evening, November 25, 1843

My Only Friend,—How shall I thank thee for once more breaking the chains of my sorrowful slumber? My heart beats. I live again, for I feel that I am worthy audience for thee, and that my being would be reason enough for thine.

Master, my eyes are always clear. I see that the universe is rich, if I am poor. I see the insignificance of my sorrows. In my will, I am not a captive; in my intellect, not a slave. Is it then my fault that the palsy of my affections benumbs my whole life?

I know that the curse is but for the time. I know what the eternal justice promises. But on this one sphere it is sad. Thou didst say, thou hadst no friend but thy art. But that one is enough. I have no art, in which to vent the swell of a soul as deep as thine, Beethoven, and of a kindred frame. Thou wilt not think me presumptuous in this saying, as another might. I have always known that thou wouldst welcome and know me, as would no other who ever lived upon the earth since its first creation.

Thou wouldst forgive me, master, that I have not been true to my eventual destiny, and therefore have suffered on every side “the pangs of despised love.” Thou didst the same; but thou didst borrow from those errors the inspiration of thy genius. Why is it not thus with me? Is it because, as a woman, I am bound by a physical law, which prevents the soul from manifesting itself? Sometimes the moon seems mockingly to say so—to say that I, too, shall not shine, unless I can find a sun. O, cold and barren moon, tell a different tale !

But thou, oh blessed master! dost answer all my questions, and make it my privilege to be. Like a humble wife to the sage or poet, it is my triumph that I can understand and cherish thee; like a mistress, I arm thee for the fight; like a younger daughter, I tenderly bind thy wounds. Thou art to me beyond compare, for thou art all I want. No heavenly sweetness of saint or martyr, no many-leaved

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Raphael, no golden Plato, is anything to me, compared with thee. The infinite Shakespeare, the stern Angelo, Dante—bitter-sweet like thee,—are no longer seen in thy presence. And, besides these names, there are none that could vibrate to thy crystal sphere. Thou hast all of them, and that ample surge of life besides, that great winged being which they only dreamed of. There is none greater than Shakespeare; he, too, is a god; but his creations are successive: thy fiat comprehends them all.

Last summer I met thy mood in nature, on those wide, impassioned plains flower-and crag-bestrewn. There the tide of emotion had rolled over, and left the vision of its smiles and sobs, as I saw to-night from thee.

If thou wouldst take me wholly to thyself—! I am lost in this world, where I sometimes meet angels, but of a different star from mine. Even so does thy spirit plead with all spirits. But thou dost triumph and bring them all in.

Master, I have this summer envied the oriole which had even a swinging nest in the high bough. I have envied the least flower that came to seed, though that seed were thrown to the wind. But I envy none when I am with thee.

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EMMA WILLARD TO MRS. A. H. LINCOLN

Mrs. Emma Willa, a pioneer of the higher education of women in the United States, ran a "Female Seminary" with her sister, Mrs. Lincoln, at Troy (N.Y.) after the death in 1825 of her husband, Dr. John Willard, the U.S. Marshal of Vermont. She was succeeded as head of the seminary in 1838 by her son John Hart Willard, and she married Dr. Christopher C. Yates, from whom she was divorced in 1843, resuming her former name. The following is the first letter written to her sister at the seminary when the writer had started on her travels to Europe in 1830.

Ship Charlegmagne, Oct. 20th,
Lat. 49°, Lon. 12° 14'.
(1830.)

MY dear Sister,—You see from our latitude and longitude that we are nearing our mark. Our Captain says, that three days easy sailing will carry us to our destined port. Still the winds may be adverse, and the most dangerous part of our voyage is yet before us; for the skilful mariner fears not water but land. We have had a rough though not an unsafe passage. The wind however blew a gale on the eighteenth, and again a more severe one, about two o'clock, the night after. Indeed since the Sunday after we left home, we have had not more than two or three pleasant days.

I find it difficult to do much on ship-board; but generally my time has passed not unpleasantly away. Especially would I hasten to inform my kind friends and family, that I have a prospect of realizing the benefit which I had expected to my health, from a sea voyage. Yet I have not been sea-sick, neither have I exercised as much on deck, owing to the roughness of the weather, as I could have wished: but the perpetual motion in which I am kept by the winds and waters; rocking, and rolling, and tossing; holding with might and main, by some fixed object during the day to keep from being shot across the cabin, and

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grasping the side of my berth at night for fear of being rolled over the side,—all this, though not particularly diverting at the time, is yet very conducive to my health; and seems to put in motion those vital functions, which want of suitable exercise for the body, or too much mental exertion had deranged. But not alone to second causes, should we attribute the good which we enjoy.

The gale which we experienced in the night, though by no means alarming to the seamen, was to me terrific. It was the more so from the wind's having blown violently during the day; for ordinarily, if a wind strikes a ship with the sails properly arranged, it does not immediately produce those effects which I had supposed. The ship seems to stiffen up and brace herself to her work; and she shoots off swiftly and proudly over the waters; whose surface is comparatively smooth while the pressure of the winds is upon them. After the winds have abated, then the waters rise up in unequal masses; sometimes lifting the vessel, as if to the heavens, and again plunging her as if to the depths below; and sometimes they come foaming, and dashing, and breaking over the ship; striking the deck with a startling force. . . .

Thoughts of ocean caverns—of what would be the consequences of one's death, naturally rise in the mind at such a time. Perhaps it might be better that I should never return. Like Lycurgus, I had made, as I believed, wise laws for the little community at home, and they were to be observed till I came again. I had hoped to see the shores of "sunny France," but mansions are prepared on brighter shores than these. Thus can the soul be anchored, amidst the profoundest depths of the stormy ocean.

I have to be thankful not only that I have thus far escaped the dangers of the sea, but also for several circumstances of peculiar comfort. Our society is composed of a group of agreeable and intelligent travellers, mostly Americans, but some French and a few of other nations. They are nearly all gentlemen. We have in the ladies cabin but two females besides myself—Miss D. the young lady, who with her father joined us in New York, I find

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to be interesting, intelligent and accomplished. The other female passenger is Mary E—, a little girl of eight years old, bound from Philadelphia to Geneva, there to be educated under the care of a grandmother. There is not an individual with whom she was acquainted before she was introduced on board, the day of our embarkation. Mr. D. the father of Miss D. is the consistent Christian gentleman. His having resided in Europe in his youth and visited it since, makes him a most desirable travelling companion.

You can scarcely conceive how much you may feel at home on the ocean. The cabin is your parlor,—the ship the world—the captain the chief magistrate,—the grand political question, how fast do we get on our course; and the news related entirely to the weather. Some of the older passengers, play a covert game to frighten those who are fresh and timid; though they are careful of the sensibilities of us “weaker vessels,” especially if there are any appearances really alarming.

Captain R. is very attentive and polite. He is a real veteran of the ocean, who has seen all weathers, and braved all storms; and one would as soon expect the mast to be frightened as him. I think he does not much like to be catechised respecting the weather, as I remark, that though he answers politely, it is evidently in a way to make us more afraid; much after the fashion of one of our Troy ferrymen, who when the waters of the Hudson were in commotion, comforted a squalling lady, by telling her “Never you fear Madam—the worst is to come—we are past all safety.” This has just the effect which he probably intends, that of keeping us from tearing him with questions, and asking him for information which he could not give. In the description of the ship, and drawings of its different parts, which I am making out and shall send you for our pupils, he seems to take pleasure in assisting me, when his duties will permit, and on this subject answers all my questions with great patience. Whenever he takes an observation he spreads out his chart before us, and shows our own position. I am indebted to his stalwart

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arm, and firm footing for many a pleasant walk upon the deck, which in our rough weather I cannot navigate alone, or with one whose sea-feet are no better than my own. Sometimes during these walks old Neptune pays his respects to us, by dashing upon our heads a copious measure of his element, which sends us dripping to the cabin. . . .

Saturday 23d.—Last evening when we were at tea, there was a cry from the deck, “a light-ho!” and we all scampered up to see it. It was from the Lizard Point, on the coast of England. The Eddystone light was also seen last evening, and this morning we had for the first time this side the Atlantic, the cheering view of land. This was Cape La Hogue, on the west of France, and we are at this moment sailing with a fine breeze, having a full view of the coast. We have finer weather than we have had since the Sunday after our departure. This moment Capt. R. enters our cabin, “Well, ladies, there is a pilot boat advancing.” Good bye, pen and ink, I must see it.

Accept, dear Almira, the affectionate adieus of
Your sister.

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JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO MARGARET CARLYLE

Jane Carlyle's mother-in-law was fortunate in her correspondent.

Chelsea, November 1834.

. . . . The weather is grown horribly cold, and I am chiefly intent, at present, on getting my winter wardrobe into order. I have made up the old black gown (which was dyed puce for me at Dumfries) with my own hands; it looks twenty per cent. better than when it was new; and I shall get no other this winter. I am now turning my pelisse. I went yesterday to a milliner's to buy a bonnet; an old, very ugly lady, upwards of seventy, I am sure, was bargaining about a cloak at the same place; it was a fine affair of satin and velvet; but she declared repeatedly that "it had no air," and for her part she could not put on such a thing. My bonnet, I flatter myself, has an air; a little brown feather nods over the front of it, and the crown points like a sugar-loaf! The diameter of the fashionable ladies at present is about three yards; their bustles are the size of an ordinary sheep's fleece. The very servant-girls wear bustles! Eliza Miles told me a maid of theirs went out one Sunday with three kitchen dusters pinned on as a substitute. . . .

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MRS. BYRON TO JOHN HANSON

Mrs. Byron was the poet's mother, by Captain Byron, who was also the father of Augusta Byron, afterwards Leigh, through his second wife, Amelia d'Arcy, Baroness Conyers. Hanson was Byron's solicitor. The following is Mrs. Byron's explanation, in reply to enquiries why Byron had not returned to Harrow in September 1803, after his summer holidays.

i

Oct. 30, 1803.

YOU may well be surprised, and so may Dr. Drury that Byron is not returned to Harrow. But the Truth is, I cannot get him to return to school, though I have done all in my power for six weeks past. He has no indisposition that I know of, but love, desperate love, the *worst* of all *maladies* in my opinion. In short, the Boy is distractedly in love with Miss Chaworth, and he has not been with me three weeks all the time he has been in this country, but spent all his time at Annesley.

If my son was of a proper age and the lady disengaged, it is the last of all connexions that I would wish to take place; it has given me much uneasiness. To prevent all trouble in future, I am determined he shall not come here again till Easter; therefore I beg you will find some proper situation for him at the next Holy days. I don't care what I pay. I wish Dr. Drury would keep him.

I shall go over to Newstead to-morrow and make a last effort to get him to Town.

ii

(Byron was now at Cambridge.)

Jan. 11, 1806.

. . . . The Bills are coming in thick upon me to double the amount I expected; he went and ordered just what he pleased at Nottingham, and in London. However, it is of no use to say anything about it, and I beg you will take no

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notice. I am determined to have everything clear within the year, if possible.

iii

March 1, 1806.

. . . . I beg you will not mention to my son, having heard from me, but try to get out of him his reason for wishing to leave England, and where he got the money. I much fear he has fallen into bad hands, not only in regard to Money Matters, but in other respects. My idea is that he has inveigled himself with some woman that he wishes to get rid of and finds it difficult. But whatever it is, he must be got out of it.

iv

March 4, 1806.

. . . . That Boy will be the death of me, and drive me mad! I never will consent to his going Abroad. Where can he get Hundreds? Has he got into the hands of Money-lenders? He has no feeling, no Heart. This I have long known; he has behaved as ill as possible to me for years back. This bitter Truth I can no longer conceal: it is wrung from me by *heart-rending agony*. I am well rewarded. I came to Nottinghamshire to please him, and now he hates it. He knows that I am doing everything in my power to pay his Debts, and he writes to me about hiring servants!

v

Ap. 24, 1806.

. . . . Lord Byron has given £31. 10 to Pitt's statue. He has also bought a carriage, which he says was intended for me, which I *refused* to accept of, being in hopes it would stop his having one.

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AUGUSTA LEIGH TO THE REV. FRANCIS HODGSON

Regarding the marriage of her half-brother, Byron, who has been accused of a secret liaison with her.

(Feb. 1815)

. . . . I have every reason to think that my beloved B. is very happy and comfortable. I hear constantly from him and his *Rib*. . . . From my own observations on their epistles, and knowledge of B's disposition and ways, I really hope *most confidently* that all will turn out very happily. It appears to me that Lady By *sets about* making him happy quite in the right way . . .

. . . . Lady B. writes me word she never saw her father and mother so happy; that she believes the latter would go to the bottom of the sea herself to find fish for B's dinner; that he (B) owns at last that he is very happy and comfortable at Seaham, though he had *pre-determined* to be very miserable. In some of her letters she mentions his health not being very good, though he seldom complains, but says both that his spirits have been improved by some daily walks she had prevailed on him to take; and attributes much of his languor in ye morning and *feverish feels* at night to his *long* fasts, succeeded by too hearty meals for any weak and empty stomach to bear at one time, waking by night, sleeping by day. I flatter myself her influence will prevail over these bad habits. They had been playing the fool one evening, "old and young." B. dressed in Lady M's long-haired wig (snatched from her head for the purpose), and his dressing-gown on, turned wrong side out; Lady B. in his travelling-cap and long cloak, with whiskers and mustachios.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

MRS. SHELLEY TO MRS. MARIA GISBORNE

About Percy Shelley, her boy. She was a widow—Shelley having been drowned eleven years before.

(Jan. 1833)

. . . . Money, of course, is the Alpha and Omega of my tale. Harrow proves so fearfully expensive that I have been sadly put to it to pay Percy's bill for one quarter (£60, *soltanto*), and, to achieve it, am hampered for the whole year. My only resource is to live at Harrow, for in every other respect I like the school, and would not take him from it. He will become a home boarder, and school expenses will be very light. I shall take a house, being promised many faculties for furnishing it by a kind friend.

To go and live at pretty Harrow, with my boy, who improves each day and is everything I could wish, is no bad prospect, but I have much to go through, and am so poor that I can hardly turn myself. It is hard on my poor dear Father, and I sometimes think it hard on myself to leave a knot of acquaintances I like; but that is a fiction, for half the time I am asked out I cannot go because of the expense, and I am suffering now for the times when I do go, and so incur debt.

No, Maria mine, God never intended me to do other than struggle through life, supported by such blessings as make existence more than tolerable, and yet surrounded by such difficulties as make fortitude a virtue, and destroy all idea of great and good luck. I might have been much worse off, and I repeat this to myself ten thousand times a day to console myself for not being better.

My Father's novel is printed, and, I suppose, will come out soon. Poor dear fellow! It is hard work for him.

. . . . Percy went back to Harrow to-day. He likes his school much.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

THE SAME TO TRELAWNY

Harrow, 7th May, 1834.

Dear Trelawny,—.....

My Father is in good health. Mrs. Godwin has been very ill lately, but is now better. . . .

. . . . They say it is a long lane that has no turning. I have travelled the same road for nearly twelve years; adversity, poverty, and loneliness being my companions. I suppose it will change at last, but I have nothing to tell of myself except that Percy is well, which is the beginning and end of my existence.

THE SAME TO MRS. MARIA GISBORNE

i

17th July 1834.

I am satisfied with my plan as regards him (Percy). I like the school, and the affection thus cultivated for me will, I trust, be the blessing of my life.

.....

Percy is much, but I think of you and Henry, and shrink from binding up my life in a child who may hereafter divide his fate from mine. But I have no resource; everything earthly fails me but him; except on his account I live but to suffer. Those I loved are false or dead; those I love, absent and suffering; and I, absent and poor, can be of no use to them. . . .

In September, during Percy's holidays, I went to Putney, and recovered youth and health; Julia Robinson was with me, and we spent days in Richmond Park and on Putney Heath, often walking twelve or fourteen miles, which I did without any sense of fatigue. I sorely regretted returning here. I am too poor to furnish. I have lodgings in the town,—disagreeable ones,—yet often, in spite of care and sorrow, I feel wholly compensated by my boy God help me if anything was to happen to him—I should not survive it a week.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

ii

February 1835.

. . . . I must tell you that I have had the offer of £600 for an edition of Shelley's works, with *Life and Notes*. I am afraid it cannot be arranged, yet at least, and the *Life* is out of the question; but in talking over it the question of letters comes up. You know how I shrink from all private details for the public; but Shelley's letters are beautifully written, and everything private might be omitted.

Would you allow the publisher to treat with you for their being added to my edition? If I could arrange all as I wish, they might be an acquisition to the books, and being transacted through me, you could not see any inconvenience in receiving the price they would be worth to the bookseller. This is all *in aria* as yet, but I should like to know what you think about it. I write all this, yet am very anxious to hear from you; never mind postage, but do write.

Percy is reading the *Antigone*; he has begun mathematics. Mrs. Cleveland and Jane dined with me the other day. Mrs. Cleveland thought Percy wonderfully improved.

The volume of Lardner's *Cyclopædia*, with my *Lives*, was published on the first of this month; it is called *Lives of Eminent Literary Men*, vol i. The lives of Dante and Ariosto are by Mr. Montgomery. The rest are mine.

Do write, my dearest Maria, and believe me ever and ever, affectionately yours,

M. W. Shelley.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

MRS. SELINA MACAULAY TO THOMAS B.
MACAULAY

When Zacchary Macaulay was not writing wise letters to Tom, his wife was.

Clapham, May 28, 1813.

MY dear Tom,—I am very happy to hear that you have so far advanced in your different prize exercises, and with such little fatigue. I know you write with great ease to yourself, and would rather write ten poems than prune one: but remember that excellence is not attained at first. All your pieces are much mended after a little reflection, and therefore take some solitary walks, and think over each separate thing. Spare no time or trouble to render each piece as perfect as you can, and then leave the event without one anxious thought. I have always admired a saying of one of the old heathen philosophers. When a friend was condoling with him that he so well deserved of the gods, and yet they did not shower their favours on him, as on some others less worthy, he answered, “I will, however, continue to deserve well of them.” So do you, my dearest. Do your best because it is the will of God you should improve every faculty to the utmost now, and strengthen the powers of your mind by exercise, and then in future you will be better enabled to glorify God with all your powers and talents, be they of a more humble, or higher order, and you shall not fail to be received into everlasting habitations, with the applauding voice of your Saviour, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” You see how ambitious your mother is. She must have the wisdom of her son acknowledged before Angels, and an assembled world. My wishes can soar no higher, and they can be content with nothing less for any of my children. The first time I saw your face, I repeated those beautiful lines of Watts’ cradle hymn,

Mayst thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days
Then go dwell for ever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise :—

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

and this is the substance of all my prayers for you. In less than a month you and I shall, I trust, be rambling over the Common, which now looks quite beautiful.

I am ever, my dear Tom,

Your affectionate mother,

Selina Macaulay.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

MARIA EDGEWORTH TO MISS BEAUFORT

Miss Beaufort was soon to marry Maria's father. Considering the close bond between the novelist and her father, Richard Edgeworth, with whom she collaborated in writing "Practical Education," this letter is a model of how to write to a prospective step-mother.

Edgeworthstown, May 16, 1798.

WHILST you, my dear Miss Beaufort, have been toiling in Dublin, my father has been delighting himself in preparations for June. The little boudoir looks as if it intends to be pretty. This is the only room in the house which my father will allow to be finished, as he wishes that your taste should finish the rest. Like the man who begged to have the eclipse put off, we have been here praying to have the spring put off, as this place never looks so pretty as when the lilacs and laburnums are in full flower. I fear, notwithstanding all our prayers, that their purple and yellow honours will be gone before your arrival. There is one other flower which I am sure will not be in blow for you, "a little western flower called love in idleness." Amongst the many kindnesses my father has shown me, the greatest, I think, has been his permitting me to see his heart *à découverte*; and I have seen, by your kind sincerity and his, that in good and cultivated minds love is no *idle* passion, but one that inspires useful and generous energy. I have been convinced by your example of what I was always inclined to believe that the power of feeling affection is increased by the cultivation of the understanding. The wife of our Indian yogii (if a yogii be permitted to have a wife) might be a very affectionate woman, but her sympathy with her husband could not have a very extensive sphere. As his eyes are to be continually fixed upon the point of his nose, hers, in duteous sympathy, must squint in like manner; and if the perfection of his virtue be to sit so still that the birds (*vide* Sacontala) may unmolested build nests in his hair his wife cannot better show her affection than by yielding her

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tresses to them with similar patient stupidity. Are there not European yogiis, or men whose ideas do not go much further than *le bout du nez*? And how delightful, it must be to be chained for better for worse to one of this species! I should guess—for I know nothing of the matter—that the courtship of an ignorant lover must be almost as insipid as a marriage with him; for “my jewel” continually repeated, without new setting, must surely fatigue a little.

You call yourself, my dear Miss Beaufort, my friend and companion; I hope you will never have reason to repent beginning in this style towards me. I think you will not find me encroach upon you. The overflowings of your kindness, if I know anything of my own heart, will fertilise the land, but will not destroy the landmarks. I do not know whether I most hate or despise the temper which will take an ell where an inch is given. A well-bred person never forgets that species of respect which is due to situation and rank. Though his superiors in rank treat him with the utmost condescension, he never is “Hail fellow well met” with them: he never calls them Jack or Tom by way of increasing his own consequence.

I flatter myself that you will find me gratefully exact *en belle fille*. I think there is a great deal of difference between that species of ceremony which exists with acquaintance, and that which should always exist with the best of friends: the one prevents the growth of affection, the other preserves it in youth and age. Many foolish people make fine plantations, and forget to fence them; so the young trees are destroyed by the young cattle, and the bark of the forest trees is sometimes injured. You need not, dear Miss Beaufort, fence yourself round with very strong palings in this family, where all have been early accustomed to mind their boundaries. As for me, you see my intentions, or at least my theories, are good enough; if my practice be but half as good, you will be content, will you not? But Theory was born in Brobdingnag, and Practice in Lilliput. So much the better for *me*. I have often considered, since my return home, as I have seen all this family pursuing their several occupations and amusements, how much

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you will have it in your power to add to their happiness. In a stupid or indolent family your knowledge and talents would be thrown away; here, if it may be said without vanity, they will be the certain source of your daily happiness. You will come into a new family, but you will not come as a stranger, dear Miss Beaufort; you will not lead a new life, but only continue to lead the life you have been used to in your own happy, cultivated family.

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

LUCY AIKIN TO MRS. AIKIN

Mrs. Aikin was a sister-in-law of Letitia Barbauld and her daughter, aged twenty-four in 1805, now more than rivals the once popular poetess for a place in literary history. Her historical works are nearly as interesting still as her letters. Edmund Aitkin (see below) was her brother.

i

Stoke Newington, November 1805.

WE do grumble a little, my dear mother, I assure you, at being so long without you; but knowing how very much you are wanted where you are, we think it would be wrong to press your return sooner than the day you mention, against which time I will take care to have all preparations made. Well! what do you all say to this glorious, dear-bought victory? Twenty ships for a hero! At this rate I think our enemies would be beggared first. But never was there a more affecting mixture of feelings. Even the hard-hearted underwriters assembled at Lloyds to hear the news could not stand it: when the death of Nelson was proclaimed, they one and all burst into tears. It is thought that the Londoners will put on mourning without any public orders. The illumination of the public offices last night was splendid, but many private streets were not lighted up at all, so much did sorrow prevail over triumph. The windows, it is said, were broken, and some of the mob cried out, "What! light up because Nelson is killed?" Nobody can, or ought to pity him, however, for what hero ever died a death more glorious? They say that he saw fifteen ships strike before he fell.

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LUCY AIKIN TO DR. AND MRS. AIKIN

Lambridge, July 5, 1818.

My dear Father and Mother,—You may believe that I have not neglected to renew my acquaintance with my old friend Mrs. B. After mutual calls, she invited me to a thing mightily in my line—a concert. I was gratified, however, with some of the music, and glad to find that her eldest girl is regarded as a king of musical prodigy, to the delight of father and mother. In a corner of the room sat a little thin old lady, muffled up in a black dress, without a bit of white to be seen, with a high, smart head-dress, well rouged cheeks, long nose, and very lively black eyes, whose *picturesque* appearance almost instantly attracted my notice. “Let me introduce you,” cried Mrs. B. “to Mrs. Piozzi!” “By all means,” exclaimed I, for a hundred associations made me long to talk with the rival of “Bozzy”; and I went and sat by her. Her vivacity has not forsaken her, and I have been at once gratified and tantalised on our return from Bath this morning, to find her card left for me. I hope to find her at home when I return the visit. She is now seventy-nine, and seems as if she might enjoy life a long time yet. . . .

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LUCY AIKIN TO EDMUND AIKIN

i

Stoke Newington, May 8, 1815.

Dear Edmund,—I hope you will allow that everybody loves ten times better to receive what you call a gossiping letter than to write one—judge, then, by the size of paper I have taken to fill, how welcome are your epistles to me! . . .

Well, the beginning of last week I was, as I told you, in town. An evening party on Monday at the N——'s rather too grave and Presbyterian; but to make amends we had an alderman, a person excellent in his way, thinner indeed than alderman beseems (but his wife atones for that), and he had a red face, hair powdered snow-white, and one of those long, foolish noses that look as if they thrust themselves into everything. Then, ye gods! he is musical; summoned Miss N— to the instrument by touching a few call-notes, and would fain have sung with her, but wicked N— had left her duets behind, and would not patronise his proposal of taking *two-thirds* of a glee for three voices, so, to my unspeakable mortification, he had no opportunity of exhibiting. Have I got thus far in my letter and said nothing of last Friday! It is a great proof of my methodical and chronological habits of writing that I did not jump to this *period of my history* in the first paragraph. Know, that on Thursday last arrived an invitation from the Carrs to my father and my aunt to dine with them the next day, to meet Walter Scott—apologies at the same time that their table would not admit us all. Well! nothing could persuade my father to go, so my aunt said she would take me instead and I had not the grace to say no. A charming day we had. I did not indeed see much of the great lion, for we were fourteen at dinner, of whom about half were constantly talking, and neither at table nor after was I very near him; but he was delighted to see my aunt, and paid her great attention, which I was very glad of. He told her that the “Tramp, tramp,” “Splash, splash,” of Taylor’s “Leonora,” which she had carried into Scot-

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land to Dugald Stewart many years ago, was what made him a poet. I heard him tell a story or two with a dry kind of humour, for which he is distinguished; and though he speaks very broad Scotch, he is a heavy-looking man, and has little the air of a gentleman. I was much pleased with him—he is lively, spirited, and quite above all affectation. He had with him his daughter, a girl of fifteen, the most naive child of nature I ever saw; her little Scotch phrases charmed us all, and her Scotch songs still more. Her father is a happy minstrel to have such a lassie to sing old ballads to him, which she often does by the hour together, for he is not satisfied with a verse or two, but chooses to have *fit* the first, second and third. He made her sing us a ditty about a Border *reiver* who was to be hanged for stealing the bishop's mare, and who dies with the injunction to his comrades :

If e'er ye find the bishop's cloak,
Ye'll mak' it shorter by the hood.

She also sung us a lullaby in Gaelic—very striking novelties both, in a polished London party. Nobody could help calling this charming girl pretty, though all allowed her features were not good, and we thought her not unlike her father's own sweet Ellen. I had the good fortune to be placed at dinner between Mr. Whishaw and Sotheby, better known by Wieland's "Oberon" than by his own "Saul." He is a lively, pleasant, elderly man; his manners of the old school of gallantry, which we women must ever like. A lady next him asked him if he did not think we could see by Mr. Scott's countenance, if "Waverley" were mentioned, whether he was the author? "I don't know," said Mr.—, "we will try." So he called out from the bottom of the table to the top, "Mr. Scott, I have heard there is a new novel coming out by the author of 'Waverley'; have you heard of it?" "I have," said the minstrel, "and I believe it." He answered very steadily, and everybody cried out directly, "O, I am glad of it!" "Yes," said Mr. Whishaw, "I am a great admirer of these novels"; and we began to discuss which was the best of the two; but the

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Scott kept out of this debate, and had not the assurance to say any handsome things of the works, though *he* is not the author—O no! for he denies them.*

Mr. Wishaw was lamenting that his friend Dumont is returning to Geneva; "but he has the *maladie du pays*, like all Swiss. Talleyrand says that to a Genevois, Geneva is *la cinquième partie du monde*, and Dumont has a prospect of being Secretary of State, with a salary of £50 per annum. And they do not give cabinet dinners there, but *gouters*." "Of what?" "Peach tart, I suppose." He asked me what was become of that Roscoe who was under Smyth at Cambridge some years ago—A pretty, romantic young man, and the gods had made him poetical. There were verses to a lily by moonlight! "O," said I, "*he is a steady banker now.*" "A *steady* banker?" "Yes; there is something of the old character left, certainly, but he is more a man of the world than he was then." "O, of course; a banker is *of the earth, earthy.*" I greatly doubt whether *the lion* of the day uttered any roarings equal to these. But the latter part of the evening, our laughing philosopher fell in love with the little Scotch lassie, and only "roared like any sucking dove."

I positively must chatter no longer, I am so busy today.

Your affectionate

L. Aikin.

ii

Stoke Newington, July 1815.

I have been longing to hear from you, my dear Edmund, for a great while, but guessed how it was that you deferred writing. At last, by some mistake at home about the time of my return, your letter was sent to Brighton just after I left it; no matter, it reached me safe at last, and I thank you very much for all its contents, particularly the letter to Warwick, of which the P.S. is certainly very curious.

Well, but Brighton!—you will expect to hear about it.

* Of Scott's novels, "*Waverley*," 1814, and "*Guy Mannering*," 1815, only had been published at this date: he had not yet declared himself as their author; his reputation, therefore, rested on his work as a poet and essayist.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

I, for my part, care very little if I never hear of it more; it is a most stupid, disagreeable place, but has the advantage of making home quite a paradise in comparison. I saw no person whatever that I knew except Mrs.— and her family; Mr.— was only once there, from Saturday night to Monday morning, so that we were forced to put up with petticoat parties—things which in the long run rather weary me. Nothing however, could be more friendly than Mrs.—’s attentions to me, and I greatly enjoyed both my rides and my bathing, for which I am also somewhat the better. The situation of Brighton is certainly far from beautiful—a shingly shore, without sands and without rock, except a bald, low chalk cliff on one side—a sea without ships and land without trees; but it must be confessed that it assembles all imaginable conveniences for summer visitants; lodgings of every kind and price, horses, chaises, gigs, donkeys, and donkey-carts to hire; excellent shops, libraries, news-rooms, etc. The bathing, however, is not in general very good; they do not often push the machines far enough out to treat you with deep water, and *you*, or rather *we* ladies, have only the alternative of wading in over sharp shingles, and then sitting down to be knocked over and partially wetted by a wave, or to be carried, as I saw a gawky girl, between two bathing-women, head downwards, heels kicking in the air, red dirty legs belonging to ditto completely exposed, and the patient shrieking and crying like a pig taken to the slaughter—a mode which had rather too much the appearance of a penal ducking to suit my fancy. Well—but no matter for this now; I am at home and found everybody well; my aunt K— mending. Glad they were to see me again, for you may believe that without Arthur and us two the house would seem dull enough to my father and mother. I was also glad not to miss more of Mr. W—’s company, for you know he is a great favourite of mine To our great joy, in came Mr. Wishaw, and knowing that Mr. W— wished to see him, we sent for him. Some time after, my Aunt Barbauld dropped in, and a most agreeable chat we have had. Mr. Wishaw read to us an agreeable

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letter from Miss Edgeworth, about his "Life of Mungo Park," with a postscript by Mr. E—, who is very ill and seemingly beginning to doat, about the possibility of exploring Africa in balloons, which, he says, he knows the art of guiding—in perfectly calm air. . . .

Mr. W— says that the Duchess of Cumberland, when she comes over, will probably gain great influence with the Regent, being a very clever, intriguing woman, and that the old Queen will probably be soon out of her way, as she is not likely to live—a hint this for buying mourning!

Goodbye. Don't let it be nearly so long before you write again. My father and mother send their kind love.

Your ever affectionate sister,
L. A.

iii

Stoke Newington, November 1815.

My Dear Edmund,—I am glad of this opportunity, to thank you for your letter by H.K., and to tell you how glad we all are that you have got this new job. . . .

Benger has been spending part of two days with us. She is pretty well for one who will never let herself alone, and full of curious anecdote as usual. Charley Wesley, a while ago, took a queer very fat old Mrs. S— to see the Queen go to the Drawing-room. In the ante-chamber, in which they waited, were no seats, and the fat lady, becoming tired of standing, at last spread her handkerchief on the floor, and seated herself in a picturesque manner upon it. Charles, being a great blunderer, and somewhat wicked besides, gave the alarm several times that the Queen was coming, and as often poor Mrs. S— made incredible efforts to get up and see her. At last, he had cried wolf so often that she did not heed him, and when the Queen came indeed she was not able, with the help of all his tugging to rise from the ground till her Majesty was past; and one end of her hoop was all that blessed the eyes of this loyal and painstaking subject. To complete the misfortune, she was kept waiting for her carriage, owing to Charles' stupidity, till her dinner was spoiled and the friends she

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had invited to eat it were quite out of patience; and to mend all, this rare composition of wit and goose tells the whole story as a good joke, mimicking her to admiration. . . .

I ought to tell you that we have had a call from Mr. Rogers, who was very agreeable and entertaining with his accounts of Italy. What a beau King Murat is! The morning Mr. Rogers was presented to him he was standing in the middle of a large room, displaying his fine figure in a Spanish cloak, hat, and feather, yellow boots, pink pantaloons, and a green waistcoat! In the evening he appears in simpler costume, but still wearing roses on his shoes, a white plume in his hat, and his hair prodigiously curled and frizzed, with a long love-lock hanging down on each side. He does not dress above five times a day. Then, no king in Europe, probably, cuts such high capers in the dance—but for other qualifications for reigning, I hear nothing of them. Naples is beautiful, says Mr. Rogers, and the Court very gay and pretty; but, after all, Florence is the place one longs to live in. No city of its size has half so many fine domes and towers; then the beautiful Arno meets your eye at every turn, and beyond it the finest woods and distant mountains. His descriptions quite set me longing; such glades of myrtle, such groves of orange trees, stuck as full of fruit, he says, as the trees you see sometimes painted by a child! . . .

We are all quite well here, and all send love to you.

Your affectionate sister,

L. A.

iv

Stoke Newington, 1817.

Dear Edmund,—I must give you an anecdote of *lionising* which I have just heard. Mrs. Opie, who is still in London, was holding one of her usual Sunday-morning levees, when up come her footman, much ruffled, to tell her that a man in a smock frock was below, who wanted to speak to her—would take no denial—could not be got away. Down she goes to investigate the matter. The rustic advances, nothing abashed: “I am James Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd.” The poet is had up to the drawing-

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room, smock frock and all, and introduced to everybody. Presently he pulls out a paper—some verses which he had written that morning and would read, if agreeable. With a horrible Scotch accent, and charity-boy twang, he got through some staves, nobody understanding a line. “Mr. Hogg,” says Mrs. Opie, “I think, if you will excuse me, I could do more justice to your verses than yourself” ; so takes them from him, and with her charming delivery causes them to be voted very pretty.

On enquiring it is found that the shepherd is on a visit to Lady Cork, the great patroness of lions (see *The Two-penny Post-Bag*) is exhibited, and has doubtless, since his arrival merited this illustrious protection, by exchanging, for an habiliment so sweetly rustic, the new green coat, pink waistcoat, and fustian small clothes, in which such a worthy would naturally make a début in the great city ! As for “Lalla Rookh” it is pretty and very pretty: tender, melodious, and adorned; but my aunt Barbauld says ’tis my flower-dish, sweet and gay, and tastefully arranged, but the flowers to not *grow* there : they are picked up with pains here and there. He has thrown an infinite quantity of oriental allusion into his verse, but the reader sympathises in some degree in the labour of the writer—there is no general interest, no *entraînement*—abundance of sentimental beauty, however, as well as descriptive, some very manly lines on liberty, etc., in the prose some charming banter of reviewers—on the whole, I hope you will read it. My father has finished the writing of his *Annual Register* and is beginning his enlargement of “England Delineated.” I cannot persuade him that he works too hard; though we are all sure that it is true.

Good-bye, good-bye: I miss you very much, and so do we all. Never forget that there are those who love and are anxious for you.

Your dearly affectionate,

L. A.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI TO DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Dante Gabriel died in April 1882. Christina had been a sympathetic correspondent all his life. He was born in 1828, William in 1829 and Christina in 1830. His picture, "Dante's Dream," was bought by the Liverpool corporation.

i

30, Torrington Square, W.C.

(September 5, 1881.)

MY dear Gabriel,—We are all congratulant over the Dante picture, Mamma heading our family phalanx. I do certainly think it would have been sacrificing real advantage to a mere punctilio if you had held out about its being sold (merely in appearance) from the Exhibition. It looks very friendly of Mr. Caine to have gone off to Liverpool on purpose to see with his own eyes. I am much pleased with his Academy article, though sorry that he seems to have misapprehended my reference to the "Portuguese Sonnets." Surely not only what I meant to say but what I do say is, not that the Lady of those sonnets is surpassable, but that a "Donna innominata" by the same hand might well have been unsurpassable. The Lady in question, as she actually stands I was not regarding as an "innominata" at all—because the later type, according to the traditional figures I had in view, is surrounded by unlike circumstances. I rather wonder that no one (so far as I know) ever hit on my semi-historical argument before for such treatment—it seems to me so full of poetic suggestiveness. That you praise it endorses its worth to me, and I am graced by Mr. Watts's approbation. I do not recall anything in my private (? previous) volume which foreshadows the "Ballad of Boding"; but your memory may well outdo mine. As to the Sonnet you hint at, I cannot joke on that subject. I am desirous of the Athenaeum critique, and fancied it might be out ere this; but am not impatient.

To get back a moment to my book. I cannot forbear

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adding how delighted I am at the favourable verdicts on the "Pageant." I fancy it among the best and most wholesome things I have produced, and I have had a quiet grin over October's remark which ushers in November, as connecting it with my own brothers and myself! Pray appreciate the portrait.—It dawns upon me that "Sleep at Sea" is the piece in your mind. I hope the diversity is sufficient to justify the "Ballad of Boding."

Surely you need not restrict your affectionate family callers to those moments when there is something "to show" ; but this is merely an observation en passant.

With a best of good loves from our Mother, etc.

ii

30 Torrington Square, W.C.
(2 December 1881).

My dearest Gabriel,—I write because I cannot but write for you are continually in my thoughts and always in my heart, much more in our Mother's who sends you her love and dear blessing.

I want to assure you that, however harassed by memory or by anxiety you may be, I have (more or less) heretofore gone through the same ordeal. I have borne myself till I became unbearable by myself, and then I have found help in confession and absolution and spiritual counsel, and relief inexpressible. Twice in my life I tried to suffice myself with measures short of this, but nothing would do; the first time was of course in my youth before my general confession, the second time was when circumstances had led me (rightly or wrongly) to break off the practice. But now for years past I have resumed the habit, and I hope not to continue it profitlessly.

"'Tis like frail man to love to walk on high,

But to be lowly is to be like God,"

is a couplet (Isaac Williams) I thoroughly assent to.

I ease my own heart by telling you all this, and I hope I do not weary yours. Don't think of me merely as the younger sister whose glaring faults are known to you, but as a devoted friend also.

MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, FRIENDS

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI TO WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI

William lived to edit posthumous collected editions of the poems of both his brother and younger sister. "Lucy" was William's wife. She was the daughter of Madox Brown, the painter. Mr. Sharp's (i.e. William Sharp's) book was his critical work on D. G. Rossetti, who had died the previous spring. "Our Maria," refers to their sister, who died in 1876.

July 26, 1882.

MY dear William,—Before I say how delighted Mamma was with your letter yesterday, I will beg you to convey her thanks to Lucy for her previous one, which was the first to tell us the good news of your being better, . . . You may think how (if possible) our Mother is now more than ever anxious that no imprudence should detract from the well-being of her "Willie Wee"—now that her four have dwindled to 2. Everything you narrate or can narrate of your funny little five cheers and interests her warm, grandmotherly heart. I wish little Mary may inherit inward virtues even more than outward beauty from our fine-natured and fine-personned Grandmother; of whom, by the by, I sometimes reminded Mamma in my early days. . . .

Do you remember how our Maria was impressed by the impartiality of your "Lives of Poets"? Now I am so too, as well as by the admirable lucidity of your style. The facts would be interesting under any treatment, but you help instead of hindering readers. Those were interesting notes about Trelawny you lately contributed to the *Athenaeum*, and naturally I clap hands at your review of Longfellow.

Please give Lucy our two loves, and (if you can get through them) our ten kisses to Olive, Arthur, Helen, Mary, Michael. What a prostrate poem does Mr. Swinburne address to the twins! He has kindly presented me with his volume, a valued gift, and I cannot forbear lend-

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ing you—more especially lending Lucy—the letter which accompanied the book. How much I like the Dedications, both prose and verse. This is the fourth book he has sent me, and I not one hitherto to him—so for lack of aught else I am actually offering him a “Called to be Saints,” merely, however, drawing his attention to the verses.

Mr. Sharp has paid us two visits, one this afternoon, all about his book. Through Aunt Charlotte he has had access to the “Girlhood” picture, and soon he hopes to see what Miss Heaton has at Leeds. I called his attention to the window and pulpit at Scarborough, of which apparently he had never even heard. He tells us that Mr. Tirebuck is sub-editor of a Yorkshire paper, I forget the name. Some of the Memoir of Gabriel I really admire, so I have far from ended in mere laughter at the style. Oh dear! how willingly would I incur Income Tax for the sake of not murdering Egyptians or any one else; and our Mother would, I am sure, double or triple hers with the same object.

I was forgetting to tell you that Mamma has lent Mr. Sharp her cherished “Main’s Sonnet Book,” giving him leave to have the Sonnet drawing engraved for his book. Mr. Clarke considered that the original could far more advantageously be worked from than could Mr. Sharp’s photograph of the same.

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JANE AUSTEN TO CASSANDRA AUSTEN

Jane was writing to her sister from the village rectory of Steventon, near Overton, Hants., where she was born in 1775, two years later than Cassandra. Cassandra was staying at the Rev. Fowle's rectory, Kintbury, Newbury. Elizabeth, daughter of the Austens' friend Mrs. Lloyd, married Mr. Fowle.

Steventon, Thursday (Jan. 9) 1796.

IN the first place I hope you will live twenty-three years longer. Mr. Tom Lefroy's birthday was yesterday, so that you are very near of an age.

After this necessary preamble I shall proceed to inform you that we had an exceeding good ball last night, and that I was very much disappointed at not seeing Charles Fowle of the party, as I had previously heard of his being invited. In addition to our set at the Harwoods' ball, we had the Grants, St. Johns, Lady Rivers, her three daughters and a son, Mr. and Miss Heathcote, Mrs. Lefevre, two Mr. Watkins, Mr. J. Portal, Miss Deanes, two Miss Ledgers, and a tall clergyman who came with them, whose name Mary* would never have guessed.

We were so terrible good as to take James† in our carriage, though there were three of us before; but indeed he deserves encouragement for the very great improvement which has lately taken place in his dancing. Miss Heathcote is pretty, but not near so handsome as I expected. Mr. H. began with Elizabeth,‡ and afterwards danced with her again; but *they* do not know how to be particular. I flatter myself, however, that they will profit by the three successive lessons which I have given them.

You scold me so much in the nice long letter which I have this moment received from you, that I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shock-

* Her mother, James' wife, née Lloyd.

† Her eldest brother.

‡ Afterwards Mrs. Fowle, daughter of Mrs. Lloyd, of Ibthorp, a close friend. Cassandra was staying at Mrs. Fowle's.

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ing in the way of dancing and sitting down together. I *can* expose myself, however, only *once more*, because he leaves the country soon after next Friday, on which day we *are* to have a dance at Ashe after all. He is a very gentlemanlike, good-looking, pleasant young man, I assure you. But as to our having ever met, except at the three last balls, I cannot say much; for he is so excessively laughed at about me at Ashe, that he is ashamed of coming to Steventon, and ran away when we called on Mrs. Lefroy a few days ago.

We left Warren at Dean Gate, in our way home last night, and he is now on his road to town. He left his love, etc. to you, and I will deliver it when we meet. Henry goes to Harden to-day in his way to Master's degree. We shall feel the loss of these two most agreeable young men exceedingly, and shall have nothing to console us till the arrival of the Coopers on Tuesday. As they will stay here till the Monday following, perhaps Caroline will go to the Ashe ball with me, though I dare say she will not.

I danced twice with Warren last night, and once with Mr. Charles Watkins, and, to my inexpressible astonishment, I entirely escaped John Lyford. I was forced to fight hard for it, however. We had a very good supper, and the greenhouse was illuminated in a very elegant manner.

We had a visit yesterday morning from Mr. Benjamin Portal, whose eyes are as handsome as ever. Everybody is extremely anxious for your return, but as you cannot come home by the Ashe ball, I am glad that I have not fed them with false hopes. James danced with Alithea, and cut up the turkey last night with great perseverance. You say nothing of the silk stockings; I flatter myself, therefore, that Charles has not purchased any, as I cannot very well afford to pay for them; all my money is spent in buying white gloves and pink persian. I wish Charles* had been at Manydown, because he would have given you some description of my friend, and I think you must be impatient to hear something about him.

* Their youngest brother.

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Henry† is still hankering after the Regulars, and as his project of purchasing the adjutancy of the Oxfordshire is now over, he has got a scheme in his head about getting a lieutenancy and adjutancy in the 86th, a new-raised regiment, which he fancies will be ordered to the Cape of Good Hope. I heartily hope he will, as usual, be disappointed in this scheme. We have trimmed up and given away all the old paper hats of Mamma's manufacture; I hope you will not regret the loss of yours.

After I had written the above, we received a visit from Mr. Tom Lefroy‡ and his cousin George. The latter is really very well-behaved now; and as for the other, he has but *one* fault, which time will, I trust, entirely remove—it is that his morning coat is a great deal too light. He is a very great admirer of Tom Jones, and therefore wears the same coloured clothes, I imagine, which *he* did when he was wounded.

Sunday,—By not returning till the 19th, you will exactly contrive to miss seeing the Coopers, which I suppose it is your wish to do. We have heard nothing from Charles for some time. One would suppose they must have sailed by this time, as the wind is so favourable. What a funny name Tom has got for his vessel! But he has no taste in names, as we well know, and I dare say he christened it himself. I am sorry for the Beaches' loss of their little girl, especially as it is the one so much like me.

I condole with M. on her losses and with Eliza on her gains, and am ever yours,

J. A.

† Another brother.

‡ Nephew of "Madam" Lefroy, a great friend.

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JANE AUSTEN TO FRANCIS AUSTEN

Jane Austens' brothers, Francis and Charles, both had distinguished careers in the Navy, retiring as Sir Francis Austen, G.C.B., Admiral of the Fleet, and Rear-Admiral Charles Austen respectively.

i

Green Park Buildings,
Tuesday Evening,
January 22, 1805.

My dearest Frank,—I wrote to you yesterday, but your letter to Cassandra this morning, by which we learn the probability of your being by this time at Portsmouth, obliges me to write to you again, having, unfortunately, a communication as necessary as painful to make to you. Your affectionate heart will be greatly wounded, and I wish the shock could have been lessened by a better preparation; but the event has been sudden, and so must be the information of it. We have lost an excellent father. An illness of only eight and forty hours carried him off yesterday morning between ten and eleven. He was seized on Saturday with a return of the feverish complaint which he had been subject to for the last three years—evidently a more violent attack from the first, as the applications which had before produced almost immediate relief seemed for some time to afford him scarcely any. On Sunday, however, he was much better—so much so as to make Bowen quite easy, and give us every hope of his being well again in a few days. But these hopes gradually gave way as the day advanced, and when Bowen saw him at ten that night he was greatly alarmed. A physician was called in yesterday morning, but he was at that time past all possibility of cure; and Dr. Gibbs and Mr. Bowen had scarcely left his room before he sunk into a sleep from which he never awoke. Everything, I trust and believe, was done for him that was possible. It has been very sudden. Within twenty-four hours of his death he was walking about with

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only the help of a stick—was even reading. We had, however, some hours of preparation, and when we understood his recovery to be hopeless, most fervently did we pray his speedy release which ensued. To have seen him languishing long, struggling for hours, would have been dreadful—and, thank God, we were all spared from it. Except the restlessness and confusion of high fever, he did not suffer, and he was mercifully spared from knowing that he was about to quit objects so beloved and so fondly cherished as his wife and children were. His tenderness as a father, who can do justice to? My mother is tolerably well; she bears up with the greatest fortitude, but I fear her health must suffer under such a shock. An express was sent for James, and he arrived here this morning before eight o'clock. The funeral is to be on Saturday at Walcot Church. The serenity of the corpse is most delightful. It preserves the sweet, benevolent smile which always distinguished him. They kindly press my mother to remove to Steventon as soon as it is all over, but I do not believe she will leave Bath at present. We must have this house for three months longer, and here we shall probably stay till the end of that time. We all unite in love, and I am,

Affectionately yours,
J. A.

ii

Green Park Buildings,
Tuesday, January 29, 1805.

My dearest Frank,—My mother has found among our dear father's little personal property a small astronomical instrument, which she hopes you will accept for his sake. It is, I believe, a compass and sun-dial, and is in a black shagreen case. Would you have it sent to you now—and with what direction? There is also a pair of scissors for you. We hope these are articles that may be useful to you, but we are sure they will be valuable. I have not time for more.

Yours very affectionately,
J. A.

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iii

At this time, Francis was Captain of the *Elephant*, which was serving in the Baltic and protecting transports with Swedish troops which helped to drive Napoleon back from Leipzig.

Chawton,

July 3rd, 1813.

My Dearest Frank,—Behold me going to write you as handsome a letter as I can! Wish me good luck. We have had the pleasure of hearing from you lately through Mary, who sent us some of the particulars of yours of June 18 (I think), written off Rugen, and we enter into the delight of your having so good a pilot. Why are you like Queen Elizabeth? Because you know how to chuse wise ministers. Does not this prove you as great a Captain as she was a Queen? This may serve as a riddle for you to put forth among your officers, by way of increasing your proper consequence. It must be a real enjoyment to you, since you are obliged to leave England, to be where you are, seeing something of a new country and one which has been so distinguished as Sweden. You must have great pleasure in it. I hope you may have gone to Carlscoon. Your profession has its *douceurs* to recompense for some of its privations; to an enquiring and observing mind like yours such *douceurs* must be considerable. Gustavus Vasa, and Charles XII, and Christina and Linneus. Do their ghosts rise up before you? I have a great respect for former Sweden, so zealous as it was for Protestantism. And I have always fancied it more like England than other countries; and, according to the map, many of the names have a strong resemblance to the English. July begins unpleasantly with us, cold and showery, but it is often a baddish month. We had some fine dry weather preceding it, which was very acceptable to the Holders of Hay, and the Masters of Meadows. In general it must have been a good hay-making season. Edward has got in all his in excellent order; I speak only of Chawton, but here he has better luck than Mr. Middleton ever had in the five years

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that he was tenant. Good encouragement for him to come again, and I really hope he will do so another year. The pleasure to us of having them here is so great that if we were not the best creatures in the world we should not deserve it. We go on in the most comfortable way, very frequently dining together, and always meeting in some part of every day. Edward is very well, and enjoys himself as thoroughly as any Hampshire-born Austen can desire. Chawton is not thrown away upon him. He talks of making a new garden; the present is a bad one and ill-situated, near Mr. Papillon's. He means to have the new at the top of the lawn behind his own house. We like to have him proving and strengthening his attachment to the place by making it better. He will soon have all his children about him. Edward, George and Charles are collected already, and another week brings Henry and William. It is the custom at Winchester for Georges to come away a fortnight before the holidays, when they are not to return any more; for fear they should overstudy themselves just at last, I suppose. Really it is a piece of dishonourable accommodation to the Master. We are in hopes of another visit from our true lawful Henry very soon; he is to be our guest this time. He is quite well, I am happy to say, and does not leave it to my pen, I am sure, to communicate to you the joyful news of his being Deputy Receiver no longer. It is a promotion which he thoroughly enjoys, as well he may; the work of his own mind. He sends you all his own plans of course. The scheme for Scotland we think an excellent one both for himself and his nephew. Upon the whole his spirits are very much recovered. If I may so express myself his mind is not a mind for affliction; he is too busy, too active, too sanguine. Sincerely as he was attached to poor Eliza moreover, and excellently as he behaved to her, he was always so used to be away from her at times, that her loss is not felt as that of many a beloved wife might be, especially when all the circumstances of her long and dreadful illness are taken into the account. He very long knew that she must die, and it was indeed a release at last. Our mourning for her is not over, or we

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should be putting it on again for Mr. Thomas Leigh, who has just closed a good life at the age of seventy-nine, and must have died the possessor of one of the finest estates in England, and of more worthless nephews and nieces than any other private man in the United Kingdom. We are very anxious to know who will have the living of Adlestrop, and where his excellent sister will find a home for the remainder of her days. As yet she bears his loss with fortitude, but she has always seemed so wrapped up in him that I fear she must feel it dreadfully when the fever of business is over. There is another female sufferer on the occasion to be pitied. Poor Mrs. L.P. (Leigh Perrot) who would now have been mistress of Stoneleigh had there been none of the vile compromise, which in good truth has never been allowed to be of much use to them. It will be a hard trial. Charles' little girls were with us about a month, and had so endeared themselves that we were quite sorry to have them go. They are now all at South End together. Why do I mention that? As if Charles did not write himself. I hate to be spending my time so needlessly, encroaching too upon the rights of others. I wonder whether you happened to see Mr. Blackall's marriage in the papers last January. We did. He was married at Clifton to a Miss Lewis, whose father had been late of Antigua. I should very much like to know what sort of a woman she is. He was a piece of perfection—noisy perfection—himself, which I always recollect with regard. We had noticed a few months before his succeeding to a College living, the very living which we recollected his talking of, and wishing for; an exceedingly good one, Great Cadbury in Somersetshire. I would wish Miss Lewis to be of a silent turn and rather ignorant, but naturally intelligent and wishing to learn, fond of cold veal pies, green tea in the afternoon, and a green window blind at night.

You will be glad to hear that every copy of S. and S. is sold, and that it has brought me £140, besides the copyright, if that should ever be of any value. I have now, therefore, written myself into £250, which only makes me

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long for more. I have something in hand which I hope the credit of P. and P. will sell well, though not half so entertaining, and by the bye shall you object to my mentioning the *Elephant* in it, and two or three other old ships? I *have* done it, but it shall not stay to make you angry. They are only just mentioned.

July 6.—I have kept open my letter on the chance of what Tuesday's post might furnish in addition, and it furnishes the likelihood of our keeping our neighbours at the Great House some weeks longer than we expected. Mr. Scudamore, to whom my brother referred, is very decided as to Godmersham not being fit to be inhabited at present. He talks even of two months being necessary to sweeten it, but if we have warm weather I daresay less will do. My brother will probably go down and sniff at it himself, and receive his rents. The rent-day has been postponed already.

We shall be gainers by their stay, but the young people in general are disappointed, and therefore could wish it otherwise. Our cousins, Colonel Thomas Austen and Margaretta, are going as aide-de-camps to Ireland; and Lord Whitworth goes in their train as Lord-Lieutenant; good appointments for each. I hope you continue well and brush your hair, but not all off.

Yours very affectionately,
J. A.

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MRS. THRALE TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

Hester Lynch Salusbury married Henry Thrale, a wealthy brewer. Johnson became her devoted friend, and was deeply hurt when, after her husband's death in 1781, she married the musician, Signor Piozzi. Her publication of "Letters to and from Dr. Johnson" preceded Boswell's "Life."

i

(Thrift and Covetousness)

August 1775.

. . . . We are all pleased that you intend to come home in a chaise. Who should you save sixteen shillings for? and how much richer would your heirs be for those sixteen shillings? Calculation is perpetually opposed to the spend-thrift; but if misers would learn to count, they would be misers no longer: for how many years must a man live to save out of a small income one hundred pounds, even if he adopted every possible method? besides the ill-will of the world, which pursues avarice more closely, and watches it more narrowly than any other vice.

I have indeed often wondered that the bulk of mankind should look on a person who gains money unjustly with less detestation than they survey the petty savings of him who lives penuriously;—for the first is in everybody's way, and if he excited everybody's hatred, who need wonder? while a hoarder injures no one but himself—yet even his heirs abhor him. There is however little call, I believe to make sermons, against covetousness for the use of dear Mr. Johnson, or of his

Faithful and obedient servant,

H. L. Thrale.

ii

Brightelmstone, Nov. 11 1778.

You are very kind, dear Sir, in wishing us at home, and we are very much obliged to you for all your good wishes, and all your good help towards our happiness; notwith-

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standing the worthy parallel you draw between yourself and *honest Joseph*. That letter in "Clarissa" was always a favourite of mine—'tis nature, 'tis truth, and, what I delight in still more, 'tis general nature, not particular manners, that Richardson represents;—Honest Joseph, and Pamela's old father and mother, are translatable, not like Fielding's fat landladies, who all speak the Wiltshire dialect—*arrow* man, or *arrow* woman instead of *e'er a man* and *e'er a woman*. Such minute attentions to things scarce worth attending to are, at best, excellencies of a meaner kind, and most worthy the partiality of him who collects Dutch paintings in preference to the Italian school. But I dare not add another word on this subject, though you are a Richardsonian yourself.

iii

Bath, Friday, April 28, 1780.

. . . . Yesterday's evening was passed at Mrs. Montagu's: there was Mr. Melmoth; I do not like him *though*, nor he me; it was expected we should have pleased each other; he is, however, just Tory enough to hate the Bishop of Peterborough for Whigism and Whig enough to abhor you for Toryism.

Mrs. Montagu flattered him finely; so he had a good afternoon on't. This evening we spend at a concert. Poor Queenie's (her daughter's) sore eyes have just released her; she had a long confinement and could neither read nor write, so my master treated her very good-naturedly with the visits of a young woman in this town, a tailor's daughter who professes music, and teaches so as to give six lessons a day to ladies, at five-and-threepence a lesson. Miss Burney says she is a great performer; and I respect the wench for getting her living so prettily; she is very modest and pretty-mannered, and not seventeen years old.

You live in a fine world indeed; if I did not write regularly you would half forget me, and that would be very

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wrong, for I *felt* my regard for you in my *face* last night when the criticisms were going on.

This morning it was all connoisseurship; we went to see the pictures painted by a gentleman-artist, Mr. Taylor, of this place.

He (Mr. Thrale, whose death was hastened by too much good-living) looks well enough, but I have no notion of health for a man whose mouth cannot be sewed up. Burney and I and Queenie tease him every meal he eats, and Mrs. Montagu is quite serious with him; but what can one do? He will eat, I think; and if he does eat I know he will not live; it makes me very unhappy, but I must bear it. Let me always have your friendship.

iv

(Pious Counsel for the Young)

November 2, 1781.

. . . . I am glad Watts' "Improvement of the Mind" is a favourite book among the Lichfield ladies; it is so pious, so wise, so easy a book to read for any person, and so useful, nay necessary, are its precepts to us all, that I never cease recommending it to our young ones. 'Tis *à la porte de chacun* so, yet never vulgar; but Law beats him for wit; and the names are very happy in Watts somehow. I fancy there was no comparison between the scholastic learning of the two writers; but there is a prodigious knowledge of the human heart, and perfect acquaintance with common life, in the "serious Call." You used to say you would not trust me with that author upstairs on the dressing-room shelf, yet I now half wish I had never followed any precepts but his. Our lasses indeed, might possibly object to the education given her daughters by Law's Eusebia. . . .

We read a good deal here in your absence, that is, *I* do; it is better we sate all together than in separate rooms; better that I read than not; and better that I should never read what is not fit for the young ladies to hear; besides, I am sure they *must* hear that which I read *out* to them, and

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so one saves the trouble of commanding what one knows will never be obeyed.

v

Johnson, after her marriage to Piozzi, following the death of Thrale, and had written to her in a vein of disapproval and reproach.

July 4, 1784.

Sir,—I have this morning received from you so rough a letter in reply to one which was both tenderly and respectfully written, that I am forced to desire the conclusion of a correspondence which I can bear to continue no longer.

The birth of my second husband is not meaner than that of my first; his sentiments are not meaner; his profession is not meaner, and his superiority in what he professes acknowledged by all mankind. It is want of fortune, then, that is ignominious; the character of the man I have chosen has no other claim to such an epithet. The religion to which he has been always a zealous adherent will, I hope, enable me to bear them at once with dignity and patience. To hear that I have forfeited my fame is indeed the greatest insult I ever yet received.

My fame is as unsullied as snow, or I should think it unworthy of him who must henceforth protect it.

I write by the coach the more speedily and effectually to prevent your coming hither. Perhaps by my fame (and I hope it is so) you mean only that celebrity which is a consideration of a much lower kind. I care for that only as it may give pleasure to my husband and his friends.

Farewell, dear Sir, and accept my best wishes. You have always commanded my esteem, and long enjoyed the fruits of a friendship, never infringed by one harsh expression on my part during twenty years of familiar talk. Never did I oppose your will, nor can your unmerited severity itself lessen my regard; but till you have changed your opinion of Mr. Piozzi, let us converse no more. God bless you.

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MRS. HOWARD TO LORD PETERBOROUGH

i

Mrs. Howard was a mistress of George II, and, when Countess of Suffolk, befriended the poet Gay, who is suspected of assisting her to write such letters as the following. The third Earl of Peterborough, to whom she writes, had been a romantic and brilliant champion of William of Orange. He was a poetaster and dilettante at this time, i.e. 1731.

I THINK you fancy me very unlike a woman to have the power to contain myself so long as to be spoken to twice without a reply—I mean to have received two of your letters without returning an answer, by which you will find that a woman's pen is not so ready as her tongue, for most women speak before they think, and I find it necessary to think before I write . . . I think that you are not in such a dying condition as your spleen represents you, when by all your thoughts and expressions your mind seems to be so much alive. I think every man is in the wrong who talks to a woman of dying for her; for the only women that can have received a benefit from such a protestation are the widows. You talk of flying from dangers, I cannot think your lordship would fly from an imaginary one who have stood so many real ones. I would not have you call it a flight but rather a retreat, for by your past conduct (if you will give me leave to make use of a *double entendre*) I suppose you will rally again.

ii

I have carefully perused your lordship's letter about your fair devil and your black devil, your hell and tortures, your heaven and happiness—those sublime expressions which ladies and gentlemen use in their gallantries and distresses.

I suppose by your fair devil you mean nothing less than an angel. If so, my lord, I beg leave to give some reasons

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why I think a woman is neither like an angel nor a devil, and why successful and unhappy love do not in the least resemble heaven and hell. It is true, you may quote these thousand gallant letters and precedents for the use of these love terms, which have a mighty captivating sound in the ears of a woman, and have been with equal propriety applied to all women in all ages.

In the first place, my lord, an angel pretends to be nothing else but a *spirit*. If, then, a woman was no more than an angel what could a lover get by the pursuit?

The black devil is a spirit too, but one that has lost her beauty and retained her pride. Tell a woman this and ask how she likes the simile.

The pleasure of an angel is offering praise; the pleasure of a woman is receiving it.

Successful love is very unlike heaven, because you may have success one hour, and lose it the next. Heaven is unchangeable. Who can say so of love and letters? In love there are as many heavens as there are women; so that, if a man be so unhappy as to lose one heaven, he need not throw himself headlong into hell.

This thought might be carried further. But perhaps you will ask me, if a woman be neither like angel or devil, what is she like? I answer, that the only thing that is like a woman is—*another woman*.

How often has your lordship persuaded foreign ladies that nothing but them could make you forsake your dear country. But at present I find it is more to your purpose to tell me that I am the only woman that could prevail with you to stay in your ungrateful country.

iii

I cannot much wonder that men are always so liberal in making presents of their hearts, yet I cannot help admiring the women who are so very fond of these acquisitions. Let us consider the ingredients that make up the heart of man.

It is composed of dissimulation, self-love, vanity, incon-

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stancy, equivocation, and such fine qualities. Who then would make that a present to a lady, when they have one of their own so very much like it?

A man's heart never wants the outward appearance of truth and sincerity. Every lover's heart is so finely varnished with them, that it is almost impossible to distinguish the true from the false ones. According to my observations the false ones have generally the finest gloss.

When your lordship asks a heart for a heart you seem to reckon them all of equal value. I fancy you think them all false ones, which is the surest way not to be often imposed upon. I beg your lordship, in this severe opinion of hearts, to except mine as well as your own.

If you were so happy as to be the owner of a false heart, you would esteem it as the most perfect present for a lady; for should you make her a present of such a one as yours was before you parted with it, it is fifty to one whether you would receive a true one in return.

Therefore, let everyone who expects an equivalent for his heart be provided with a false one, which is equally fit for the most professed lover. It will burn, flame, bleed, pant, sigh, and receive as many darts, and appear altogether as charming as a true one. Besides, it does not in the least embarrass the bearer, and I think your lordship was always a lover of liberty.

iv

I think your lordship, in the last paragraph of your letter, is a little ungenerous. In a present which you tell me you have made to me, you expect the most exact return, which generosity generally leaves to the courtesy of the receiver.

You quote scripture to justify the reasonableness of your request: 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a heart for a heart.'

This seems to me to be rather a demand of revenge and resentment than love. But a man cannot give a heart for a heart that has none to give.

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Consider, my lord, you have but one heart, and then consider whether you have a right to dispose of it. Is there not a lady at Paris who is convinced that nobody has it but herself? Did you not bequeath it to another lady at Turin? At Venice you disposed of it to six or seven, and you again parted with it at Naples and in Sicily. I am therefore obliged, my lord, to believe that one who disposes of his heart in so profuse a manner is like a juggler, who seems to fling away a piece of money, but still has it in his own keeping.

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CATERINA ROVERA TO PIETRO ARETINO

She belonged to an old literary Italian family, the Bonarelli della Rovera, but was not herself distinguished as a writer. See next note for Aretino.

20th Feb. 1530.

HONOURABLE Signor Pietro,—I was always attracted to your name, impelled by the rare and sublime virtue of your genius, which I have always known by that style which is patent to all, but on this occasion I cannot, I confess, correspond to the great condescension you have shown in writing to me. I value your letter not for its subject, because sympathy does not deceive me into esteeming too highly the merits of those who write to me (and I could not say otherwise although a foe to excessive adulation), but because your opinion of me is such as to induce so great a poet to honour me thus. But leaving aside such graces of speech and expressions of thanks, which are beyond my powers, I will simply say that I am yours and you are at liberty to command me always as it may please you. And according as the desire may visit you, being satiate with too good life, to visit these sterile parts count on the friendliness and attention of Caterina Rovera called forth by the most excellent qualities and courtesy which belong to you and by the most amiable attentions bestowed on my son, attentions of which he has so often spoken to me and any single one of which would lay me under a perpetual obligation to you.

In conclusion, please know that all I have is and will always be at your disposal.

Caterina Rovera.

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VERONICA GAMBARA TO PIETRO ARETINO

An Italian poetess, born in 1485, she was the most distinguished member of an ancient family of Brescia. She married the Lord of Corregio in 1505, and becoming a widow in 1518 remained so until she died in 1550. Scholars and poets haunted her house in Bologna and her villa in Corregio. Aretino, a licentious and satirical poet of some importance, was seven years younger than Veronica Gambara, who, treasuring the memory of her husband, found Aretino's profligate way of life a barrier between him and herself.

i

Corregio, 24 Aug. 1533.

WERE I not aware of your great courtesy, Signor Aretino, I should not have written this letter, it being so long since I have performed a like office and more especially as I have not replied to your letter, which has not been due to lack of good will but merely because the subject was disagreeable.

Your sagacity is great but I will not enlarge upon that now. It remains only for me to remind you that I am yours and my desire to serve you is in proportion to the extent that your virtue excels that of all other men. I trust you will remember me and I beg to be with all possible respect,

ii

Correggio 17 Sept. 1534.

Your letter, divine and by me greatly honoured Messer Pietro, has been more precious to me than if it had been sent by an emperor, no matter how many kingdoms he might possess and I thank you greatly but I thank fortune more, which in recompense for all the slights I have received from you hitherto, has given me your favour, which I esteem more highly than any ill or good you can or may do me. I pray then that I may continue to enjoy this

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acquired favour and know that I love and honour you as your virtues deserve. The comedy and dialogue have pleased me immensely and if I might return the favour corresponding to the honour you do me, I would do so willingly; but fearing I cannot, I will be silent, begging, however, that as it is the first, it will not be the last, nor let this be attributed to an ambitious mind but to a natural desire to live, for being praised by you, I shall live a thousand years. I await with impatience the psalms.

Adieu, Signor Pietro, enjoy good health and hold me in your favour.

iii

Correggio 29 Nov. 1534.

God knows, most virtuous Signor Pietro, that the wine I send you I should wish to be such that it far excelled all the precious liquors the world can produce, even those drunk by the Gods themselves in Paradise; but, sad it is that fortune, in small as well as in great things, ordains differently to my desires, and in this instance has, through the storms and continual rains in the vineyards, affected the quality of the wine.

Despite this, however, I did not wish to fail of sending it (such as it is) so that you might rather complain of it than of me. Deign therefore to receive it as willingly as I give it and know that I wish to be of service to you.

I have instructed the bearer to inform you to send for the wine, which will be not far distant and the messenger will be able to obtain it free of duty, as I am sure that the authorities will oblige you in a greater matter than this.

With best wishes and respects,

Veronica Gambara,

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ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING TO LEIGH HUNT

The little child she speaks of was her son Robert Wiedemann Browning, "Pen."

Bagni Di Lucca, October 6, 1857.

DEAR Friend,—I will say, for I feel it must be something as good as friendship that can forgive and understand this silence, so much like the veriest human kind of ingratitude. When I look back and think—all this time after that letter, and not a sign made—I wonder. Yet if you knew! First of all, we were silent because we waited for information which you seemed to desire.

. . . . Then there were sadder reasons. Poor Aurora, that you were so more than kind to (oh how can I think of it?), has been steeped in tears, and some of them of a very bitter sort. Your letter was addressed to my husband, you knowing by your delicate, true instinct where your praise would give most pleasure; but I believe Robert had not the heart to write when I felt that I should not have the spirits to add a word in the proper key. When we came here from Florence a few months ago to get repose and cheerfulness from the sight of the mountains, we said to ourselves that we would speak to you at ease—instead of which the word was taken from our own mouth, and we have done little but sit by sickbeds and meditate on gastric fevers. So disturbed we have been—so sad! our darling, precious child the last victim. To see him lying still on his golden curls, with cheeks too scarlet to suit the poor, patient eyes, looking so frightfully like an angel! It was very hard. But this is over, I do thank God, and we are on the point of carrying back our treasure with us to Florence to-morrow, quite recovered, if a little thinner and weaker, and the young voice as merry as ever. You are aware that that child I am more proud of than twenty Auroras, even after Leigh Hunt has praised them. He is eight years old, has never been "crammed," but reads English, Italian, French, German, and plays the piano—

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then, is the sweetest child! sweeter than he looks. When he was ill he said to me, "You pet! don't be unhappy about me. Think it's a boy in the street, and be a little sorry but not unhappy." Who could not be unhappy, I wonder.

I never saw your book called "The Religion of the Heart." It's the only book of yours I never saw, and I mean to wipe out that reproach on the soonest day possible. I receive more dogmas, perhaps (my "perhaps" being in the dark), than you do. I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ in the intensest sense—that He was God absolutely. But for the rest, I am very unorthodox—about the Spirit, the flesh, and the devil; and if you would not let me sit by you, a great many Churchmen wouldn't; in fact, churches do all of them, as at present constituted, seem too narrow and low to hold true Christianity in its proximate developments. I, at least, cannot help believing them so.

My dear friend, can we dare, after our sins against you—can we dare wish for a letter from you sometimes? Ask, we dare not. May God bless you. Even if you had not praised me and made me so grateful, I should be grateful to you for three things—for your poetry (that first), then for Milton's hair, and then for the memory I have of our visit to you, when you sat in that chair and spoke so mildly and deeply at once.

Let me be ever affectionately yours,
Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

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MRS. E. B. BROWNING TO MRS. JAMES MARTIN

Mrs. Browning's father, who had refused to be reconciled since her marriage, had died suddenly on April 17, 1857.

July 1, 1857

Thank you, thank you from my heart, my dearest friend—this poor heart, which has been so torn and mangled,—for your dear, tender sympathy, whether expressed in silence or in words. Of the past I cannot speak. You understand, yes, you understand. And when I say that you understand (and feel that you do), it is an expression of belief in the largeness of your power of understanding, seeing that few *can* understand—few can. There has been great bitterness—great bitterness, which is natural; and some recoil against myself, more, perhaps, than is quite rational. Now I am much better, calm, and not despondingly calm (as, off and on, I have been), able to read and talk, and keep from vexing my poor husband, who has been a good deal tried in all these things. Through these three months you and what you told me touched me with a thought of comfort—came nearest to me of all. May God bless you and return it to you a hundredfold, dear dear friend!

I believe *hope* had died in me long ago of reconciliation in this world. Strange, that what I called “unkindness” for so many years, in departing should have left to me such a sudden desolation! And yet, it is not strange, perhaps.

No, I cannot write any more. You will understand . . .

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DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO LADY BEAUMONT

Some hint of the keen and sensitive spirit of the *Journals* who inspired passages in her brother's poems and also in Coleridge's, is in her letters.

Grasmere, Tuesday Evening, June 17 (1806).

MY dear Friend,—You will rejoice with us in my sister's safety, and the birth of a son. There was something peculiarly affecting to us in the time and manner of this child's coming into the world. It was like the very same thing over again which happened, three years ago; for on the 18th of June, on such another morning, after such a clear and starlight night, the birds singing in the orchard in full assembly as on this 15th, the young swallows chirping in the self-same nest at the chamber window, the rosetrees rich with roses in the garden, the sun shining on the mountains, the air still and balmy—on such a morning was Johnny born, and all our first feelings were revived at the birth of his brother two hours later in the day, and three days earlier in the month; and I fancied that I felt a double rushing-in of love for it, when I saw the child, as if I had both what had been the first-born infant John's share of love to give it, and its own. We said it was to be called William at first, but we have since had many discussions and doubts about the name; and Southey, who was here this morning, is decided against William; he would keep the father's name distinct, and not have two *William Wordsworths*. It never struck us in this way; but we have another objection which does not go beyond our own household and our own particular friends, i.e., that my brother is always called William amongst us, and it will create great confusion, and we cannot endure the notion of giving up the sound of a name, which, applied to him, is so dear to us. In the case of Dorothy there is often much confusion; but it is not so bad as it would be in this case, and besides, if it were only equally confusing, the inconvenience would be doubled. Your

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kind letter to my brother arrived yesterday, with your sister's most interesting account of her sensations on ascending the Mont Denvers. I shuddered while I read; and though admiration of the fortitude with which she endured the agony of her fear was the uppermost sentiment, I could not but slightly blame her for putting herself into such a situation, being so well aware of her constitutional disposition to be thus affected. For my own part, I do think that I should have died under it, and nothing could prevail upon me to undertake such an expedition. When I was in the whispering gallery at St. Paul's I had the most dreadful sensation of giddiness and fear that I ever experienced. I could not move one foot beyond the other, and I retired immediately, unable to look down; and I am sure when the sense of personal danger should be added to that other bodily fear, it would be too much for me; therefore I had reason to sympathise with your sister in the course of her narrative.

I hope you will find the inn tolerably comfortable as I am informed that one of the upper rooms, which was formerly a bedroom, is converted into a sitting-room, which entirely does away our objections to the house for you—the upper rooms being airy and pleasant, and out of the way of noise. Among my lesser cares, and hopes, and wishes, connected with the event of your coming to Grasmere, the desire for fine weather is uppermost; but it will be the rainy season of this country, and we have had so much fine and dry weather, that we must look forward to some deduction from our comfort on that score. We received your second letter with the tidings of the finding of the Journal, the day after we had received the first. You may be sure we were very glad it was found. It is a delicious evening, and after my confinement to the house for these two days past I now doubly enjoy the quiet of the moss-hut where I am writing. Adieu! Believe me, my dear Lady Beaumont, your affectionate friend,

D. Wordsworth.

I have expressed myself obscurely about our objections

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to calling the child by William's name. I meant that we should not like to call him but as we have been used to do. I could not change William for Brother in speaking familiarly, and his wife could not endure to call him Mr. Wordsworth. Dorothy is in ecstasies whenever she sees her little brother, and she talks about him not only the day through, but in her dreams at night, "Baby, baby!"

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